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DISCOURSES
ON
THE APOCALYPSE.

SIX DISCOURSES
ON
THE PROPHECIES
RELATING TO ANTICHRIST
IN
THE APOCALYPSE OF ST. JOHN.
PREACHED BEFORE
THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN,
AT THE DONNELLAN LECTURE.

BY
JAMES HENTHORN TODD, D.D., M.R.I.A.,
FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN.

"In hoc autem tractatu, non solum pium lectorem, sed etiam liberum correctorem desidero: maxime ubi profunda versatur veritatis questio: quæ utinam tot haberet inventores, quot habet contradictores."—*Magist. Sentent. in Prologo: (ex Augustino).*

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PREFACE.

THE following Discourses were delivered in the Chapel of Trinity College, at the Donnellan Lecture, in the beginning of Michaelmas Term, 1841. They have been for some time printed, in accordance with the regulations of the Lecture, but the author withheld them from publication, with the intention of carrying on the subject by a similar examination of the remaining prophecies of the Apocalypse. He has made considerable progress in preparing himself for this task, but has been induced, for the present at least, to abandon it, chiefly from having become involved in other more immediately pressing duties, which occupy almost his entire time.

He has, therefore, brought out the present volume to acquit himself of his obligations to the University. And in the hope of removing some of the prejudices which every attempt to vindicate the literal interpretation of Prophecy must expect to meet with, he thinks it right to premise the following observations :

I. The advocates of the strictly *literal* interpretation of Prophecy are often charged with inconsistency, for admitting the existence of anything like symbol or metaphor, in the predictions they would so interpret; and it is urged that the true interpretation ought to be either wholly and rigidly literal, or else wholly and consistently symbolical. This, however, is a mistake, which owes its plausibility chiefly to the ambiguity of the term *literal*, which, it must be confessed, has often been very loosely employed; but as our language does not supply any other sufficiently familiar term that would not be liable to greater objections, it has been retained wherever there was occasion to mention the subject in the following work.

The *literal* sense of holy Scripture is commonly defined to be that signification of the words which the Author intended, and which his contemporaries, in the ordinary use of language, would have understood. Or, the literal sense is that signification of the words whereby they *immediately* denote things. The *spiritual* sense, on the other hand, is that interpretation which supposes the things designated by the literal sense to denote other things not immediately signified by the words.

The literal sense, however, thus defined, does not necessarily exclude metaphor, and therefore is to

be distinguished from the purely or servilely grammatical sense, which is often not the intention of the writer or speaker at all. The imperfection of human language compels us, even in ordinary discourse, and much more when speaking of things superhuman, to employ in a metaphorical sense many words which originally denoted sensible or material things. We speak of the "*light* of knowledge," "the *fury* of a tempest," "the *anger* of the waves," without supposing for a moment that any one would infer that we imagined knowledge to produce material light, or attributed to the winds and waves the passions of mankind. The intention of the speaker in the use of such metaphors is, therefore, the literal meaning and signification of his words, as much as if he had employed other words which had no other original or grammatical import. And so also in holy Scripture, when we read of "the eyes of the Lord," "the right hand of the Lord," "His bowels of compassion," "His wrath," "His fury," and such like expressions, their grammatical meaning is not their literal signification, because, from the poverty of human language, the words are used metaphorically to denote that for which we have no other words, or at least no other words so forcibly expressive. And this is the more to be noted, because, in some instances, the same words will be found to have

different metaphorical significations in different connexions : thus, when it is said, "*the right hand* of the Lord doeth wonders," the words are used to denote God's power and omnipotence, because in man the right hand is the instrument of strength and power ; but when it is said that Christ "*sitteth at the right hand* of God," the very same words denote, not power or strength, but the place of honour and pre-eminence ; because, amongst human sovereigns, to sit at the king's right hand would be the mark of highest confidence and trust.

Again, the most strictly literal interpretation of holy Scripture does not exclude the use of symbol. When St. John, in the Apocalypse, tells us that he saw "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars," the words *woman*, and *sun*, and *moon*, and *stars*, are all to be understood literally, even though we suppose the Holy Ghost, by these symbols, to have signified the Christian Church, or the Jewish nation, or the Mother of our Lord, according to the various interpretations that have been given to them by commentators.

Hence, all *legitimate* forms of *spiritual* interpretation are founded upon the literal sense, and presuppose it. They are usually regarded as threefold : first, *allegorical* interpretations ; as when the rites and

ceremonies of the Old Testament are interpreted to prefigure the events and doctrines of Christianity ; or when the symbolical things and actions in the visions of the prophets are taken to signify things present, or to predict events to come. Secondly, *moral* interpretations, when we draw from the events or actions recorded in sacred history instruction for our own guidance and moral conduct. And thirdly, *anagogical* interpretations, when we draw from the literal sense a deep and mystical signification, especially in reference to things eternal and unseen.

How far these various modes of interpreting Scripture are in every case lawful, is a question which cannot be here discussed. It must suffice to observe, that as they are said to be founded upon the literal sense and to presuppose it, so, in so far as this is the case, they may be regarded as lawful whenever they can be shewn to be true. For example, when St. John says (Rev. i. 12), "I saw seven golden candlesticks," the literal sense of these words is, that he really did see in his vision seven literal candlesticks of gold ; and when commentators tell us that these candlesticks signified seven Churches, they not only do not destroy, but on the contrary they presuppose, the literal sense ; there is therefore no ground, *a priori*, for doubting the lawfulness of

this interpretation, and the only question is, whether it be true; which is at once answered by the explanation given by our Lord himself (ver. 20), "the seven candlesticks are the seven Churches."

This may serve as an example of the legitimate allegorical or symbolical interpretation. And in the same way the *moral* and *anagogical* or *mystical* interpretations, even supposing them to be consistent with the literal sense, and therefore so far lawful, must, before we can fully adopt them, be further proved to be *true*; for otherwise they can be regarded only as the ingenious, and perhaps mistaken, speculations of human imagination.

One great evil to be carefully guarded against, and which has been a fruitful source of misinterpretation, is the supposition that every, or at least the greater part of holy Scripture, admits of deep and mystical meanings, over and above, if not to the exclusion of, the literal sense. This leads to the attempt to systematize the various senses of Scripture, and to define and distinguish the literal and figurative, the tropical, parabolical, symbolical, typical, allegorical, anagogical, and mystical interpretations^a; and the evil is increased by

^a For a specimen of this, see *Scripture Vindicated. Works* (Oxford, 1843), vol. iv. Waterland's Preface to Scrip-

the looseness with which these terms are applied, and the vagueness of the definitions which are commonly given of them. The allegorical sense is often called literal^b, and the various kinds of figurative interpretation are confounded with each other. But any attempt to discuss satisfactorily so large a subject would be foreign to the purpose of these remarks^c, and it must, therefore, suffice

^b The definition of the literal sense above alluded to, (viz., "that which the author intended"), is made to give countenance to this confusion; because, if the author be supposed to have intended, not a strictly literal, but a figurative meaning, or if the things intended to be expressed by the words used be, not the original or grammatical meaning of the words, but some figurative or spiritual meaning, then such figurative meaning will, by the definition, be the literal sense. Thus, Nicholas de Lyra says distinctly (Comm. in Apoc. iv. 1), "*intellectus literalis non est ille qui per voces significatur immediate, sed ille qui per imagines significatur.*" He instances in Jotham's parable of the trees (Judges, ix. 7-15),

and he adds, "*sensus literalis non est de arboribus vel lignis, sed de viris Sichem per ligna significatis.*" But this is surely great confusion of language, for Jotham undoubtedly intended by the words tree, bramble, olive-tree, fig-tree, &c., that the trees so called should primarily be intended, for otherwise his parable would cease to be a parable. The symbolical meaning which was *also* intended, but *secondarily* intended, is not the same as this primary and literal sense.

^c It is the less necessary to enter into a discussion of the general subject, because the reader may be referred to two excellent sermons, preached before the University of Dublin, in Hilary Term, 1846, by the Rev. Dr. Elrington, Regius Professor of Divinity.

to give some examples of that particular class of figurative or spiritual interpretations which are destructive of the literal sense, not founded upon it, nor presupposing it, and which ought, therefore, to be regarded as unlawful.

These examples shall be taken from the popular interpretation of the prophecies treated of in the following discourses.

1. We read in the Apocalypse, "There was war in heaven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him^d."

In this passage, as it was commonly understood by the ancient Church, and as it must be understood by every one who takes the words in their natural and obvious signification, a war in heaven is described, in which Michael and his angels fight against the devil, and cast him, with his angels, into the earth. A real event is predicted (whether already past, or still to come, is not now the question),

^d Rev. xii. 7-9.

an event in which the Archangel Michael is described as the leader of the hosts of heaven in the discomfiture of Satan and his angels. And that the prophecy is so understood by the Church must be evident from the fact, that it has been appointed to be read for the Epistle on the feast of St. Michael and all Angels.

But the modern interpreters of prophecy acknowledge in this Scripture neither St. Michael, nor the Devil, nor the angels, nor the casting out of Satan from heaven ; all is figure and allegory. Michael and the dragon, and the war of angels, are but “the robe of state,” to use the words of Bishop Hurd^c, in which the events really predicted were arrayed by the prophet, and disguised from vulgar apprehension ; and no such event as a literal war in heaven ever did, or ever will, take place.

“As heaven,” says Mr. Faber, “denotes the Visible Church general, though with special limitation to the Church general of the Western or Latin empire, so the conflicting angels are, by the very necessity of the symbol, nothing more than mere mortal men, who, within the limits of one and

^c Introduction to the Study p. 107. 5th edit. Lond. 1788.
of Prophecy, Sermon ix. vol. ii.

the same general Church, take the opposite sides of a grand litigated question."

According to this interpretation therefore, the prophecy describes, not a contest in heaven between the Archangel St. Michael and the great enemy of man, nor a war, properly so called, even on earth, but a great theological controversy which took place in Europe in the sixteenth century, between the Reformers, who are signified or represented under the figure of Michael and his angels, and the "apostate priesthood" of the Roman Church, who are signified under the figure of the Devil and his angels^f.

Or, if we give ear to Mr. Mede and his followers, the heaven of the prophecy denotes only the temporal government of the Roman empire; Michael and his angels are a figurative way of speaking of Constantine and the primitive Christians; and the dragon and his angels denote the pagan Romans, who possessed the supreme power in the empire, until they were cast out and destroyed by Constantine.

But whichever of these expositions be adopted, we must, in either case, conclude that the prophecy says nothing, either of Michael, or of Satan, or of

^f Sacred Calendar, Book v. chap. iii.

a war in heaven, in the literal and ordinary signification of the words, or of the casting out of Satan into the earth. What is this, therefore, but to substitute for the express word of God the fancies and reveries of human conjecture? To tell us, in direct opposition to the distinct words of the prophecy, that Michael and his angels did not fight against the dragon; that the dragon is not, although the prophecy distinctly tells us he is, "that old serpent called the Devil and Satan," but something entirely different, namely the apostate clergy of the "Visible Church general of the Western or Latin empire," according to the interpretation of Mr. Faber; or the pagan Romans who held the empire before the reign of Constantine, according to the interpretation which seems now to be more generally received[§].

[§] Mede's opinion that the war of Michael and the dragon denotes the overthrow of Paganism by Christianity, is adopted by Dr. Daubuz, Vitringa, Bishop Newton, Mr. Cunninghame, Mr. Elliott, &c. Although Mr. Cunninghame, when he first undertook to write on prophecy, was of the same opinion as Mr. Faber. Bossuet also thinks that the devil cast out of heaven de-

notes the fall of Paganism, but dates this fall from the death of Galerius Maximus, A. D. 311. He believes, however, that it was effected by the interposition of St. Michael: "On voit ici," he says, "que St. Michel est le défenseur de l'Eglise, comme il l'étoit de la synagogue."—*Exp. de l'Apoc.* in loc. Dr. Hammond makes Michael to signify St. Peter,

Is it, therefore, too much to say, that expositions of this kind are unlawful? That they make void the Word of God by human conjectures, and therefore derogate from its authority and supremacy as a divine revelation? For do they not deny the express statement of the Scripture, reducing it to a mere symbol, or figure, or mythos, and substituting another and a totally different statement, founded only on human imagination, but nevertheless put forward as the true and genuine testimony of the Word of God?

The Scripture, in this way of interpreting it, is regarded merely as intended to supply us with a general outline, which it is our business to fill up by our own ingenuity and sagacity. The terms in which this outline is expressed are not to be taken in their ordinary signification, but in a symbolical sense, which is also to be determined by the conjecture of the interpreter; and the result is a proposition wholly different from that which was expressed in

and the dragon, Simon Magus; and paraphrases the words, "There was war in heaven, &c.," thus :—"There was a great contention at Rome, be- tween Simon Peter on one side, the planter of the Christian	faith, and Bishop of the Jewish Christians, and so maintainer of Michael's or Christ's cause there, and Simon Magus, that apostate servant of the devil, at his second coming to Rome in Nero's time."— <i>Comm.</i> in loc.
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the letter of the sacred text, a proposition, which it was absolutely impossible the contemporaries of St. John, or any one who lived before the events supposed to be symbolized, could ever have derived from the prophecy, or received as the testimony proposed by the Scriptures to their faith.

2. To take another example. We read in the Revelation : “ And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together ; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the mighty men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains ; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb ; for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand^h.”

Can any unbiassed mind peruse these words without perceiving that here the great Day of Judgment is predicted, and that the language contains a plain allusion to the very words of our blessed Lord Himself, in a passage where it is universally allowed that the Day of wrath and judgment is describedⁱ ?

^h Rev. vi. 14-17.

ⁱ See Luke, xxiii. 30.

Nevertheless, Mr. Faber interprets this awful prophecy of the overthrow of Paganism, and its consequences, in the age of Constantine; and the same interpretation which was maintained by Mr. Mede, Bishop Newton, and others, is now very recently put forth anew by Mr. Elliott^k. In other words, we are called upon by these expositors to believe, either that the great Day of final judgment is introduced into the prophecy *as a symbol* of the fall of Paganism, or else that by "the great day of wrath of the Lamb," the Scripture intended to describe an event which would rather seem to be an instance of His love and mercy—the establishment of Christianity on the ruins of idolatry and false religion^l. But in whichever way the prophecy be understood, it is certain that the literal sense is set aside and denied, and a figurative interpretation, the offspring of human

^k See what has been said on this subject, pp. 71, 107, sq.

^l Although the commentators above named, and many others, see in the foregoing words the overthrow of Paganism and the rise of Christianity, there are not a few who discover in them the overthrow of Christianity and the rise of Atheism. So, for example, Mr.

Irvine, Mr. Frere, and Mr. Cunninghame. Such is the facility with which, on such systems, the most opposite results may be obtained from the same prophecy. But this is a different subject. The thing to be here noted is, that all these interpretations, however otherwise opposed, agree in setting aside the literal sense.

imagination, substituted for the plain and obvious testimony of the Word of God.

These remarks are made with a view to point out the sense in which the author regards symbolical expositions of prophecy as unlawful, as well as the sense in which he considers them admissible. The explanation seemed necessary, because the advocates of the literal interpretation are often taunted with inconsistency for allowing anything like metaphor or symbol into their expositions at all; and because the admission that there exist in prophecy any symbols whatsoever, even though these symbols be explained or interpreted by the Scripture itself, is regarded as a sufficient ground for making every thing symbolical.

The author of the present work, therefore, begs leave to say, that he is guilty of no inconsistency in maintaining the literal interpretation of the Apocalypse, whilst at the same time he admits and asserts that it contains many symbolical representations. He denies the lawfulness of symbolical expositions only when they contradict the literal sense of Scripture, or can otherwise be proved to be false; he receives them, it is true, in every case, with much distrust and caution, but if they are consistent with the literal signification of the words, and can be

shown to be probably or certainly true, as in very many cases they can, then he acknowledges they may be received.

II. There is one other prejudice upon which it will be necessary to say a few words. The interpretation of prophecy advocated in the following pages, is frequently represented, in popular declamations and invectives, as unfavourable to Protestantism, and as having a tendency to support the claims and peculiar doctrines of the Church of Rome. This prejudice, it is true, is often raised as a mere artifice of controversy; but there are many sincere and serious persons who are really influenced and perplexed by it, and whose scruples are entitled to every respect. To such persons it seems as if a powerful weapon were snatched from the armoury of Protestants, when we deny that the prophecies of the Apocalypse are fulfilled in the Romish corruptions: they imagine this denial to imply a more favourable view of the errors of the Church of Rome, and a less deep conviction of the evils inflicted by the Papal system on the happiness of man, than is quite consistent with an entire loyalty to the Reformation.

But the first principle of the Reformation—submission to the paramount authority of the written

Word of God—requires us to abandon the controversial interpretations of these prophecies. For if it be necessary to pervert the plain words of Holy Scripture ; to deny and reject its literal and obvious meaning ; if it be necessary to represent the Roman Catholic religion as a virtual renunciation of every article of the faith, and to pronounce all its followers, as such, to be beyond the hope or possibility of salvation ;—if all this be necessary before we can apply the prophecies that speak of Antichrist to the corruptions of Romanism, then assuredly, TRUTH requires us to abandon whatever advantages we may obtain from the use of such a weapon of controversy, even though those advantages were tenfold greater than they are ; then assuredly, such a weapon ought never to have been admitted into the armoury of Protestants, and the cause of Protestantism, if it be the cause of truth, can never lose by rejecting a weapon whose efficacy is derived from falsehood, and based on misinterpretation of the Word of God.

The author of the following pages does not think so ill of the Reformation, and is too deeply convinced of the truth of that Protestantism which is professed by the Church of England, to suppose for a moment that its cause can suffer any thing by renouncing error or embracing truth. The real question there-

fore should be, not what interpretation of prophecy is most useful or effective in controversy, but what interpretation is most in accordance with the plain words of holy Scripture, and most likely to represent exactly the mind of the Holy Ghost. The Pope-Antichrist argument is, no doubt, an effective weapon with the ignorant or the weak-minded, who look not beyond the surface, and are led away by words, rather than by things. And yet, even with them, the author is persuaded that such arguments have more frequently enflamed unholy passions and nurtured unchristian bigotry, than produced rational conviction grounded on a love of truth : whilst with the learned and sober-minded, the serious student of holy Scripture and of History, they have done more to damage the cause of Protestantism, than the disputations of twenty Bellarmines.

But it is thought that all who deny the application of the Apocalyptic prophecies to the Church of Rome, must necessarily underrate her corruptions : and therefore may fairly be suspected of a tendency to adopt them.

In answer to this, it may suffice to say that the question, whether the Roman corruptions are to be identified with the Antichrist of prophecy, has always been regarded by our divines as an open

question ; which may, therefore, be soberly and fairly made a subject of inquiry without prejudice to the disputant on either side of the argument, or breach of charity towards those who believe the Roman communion to be still a true, though fallen and erring, Church of Christ, in which salvation may be had^m. And for

^m See Hooker, Eccl. Pol. book iv. c. 8, and Sermon of Justification, sec. 17, passages too well known to need being quoted here. So also Archbishop Laud, in his speech at his trial, answering the objections against him, says : "Fourthly, that I maintain *people may be saved in the Roman Church and Religion* ; I answer, that other learned Protestants are of the same opinion Fifthly, that I hold the *Pope* is not the *Antichrist*, and therefore I caused this title given him to be expunged, and authorized, received, printed books denying him to be *Antichrist*, as *Shelford's* and others, contrary to our *Homilies*, *Writers*, and the *Articles of Ireland* : I answer, that no man can charge me that I hold the Pope not to be *Antichrist* ; it is a great question even among learned Protestants, whether he be so

or not. The *Church of England* hath not positively resolved him to be so : the *Homilies* define him not to be *Antichrist*, &c." — *Prynne's Canterbury's Doom*, p. 551-2. Archbishop Bramhall's writings are full of similar statements : "Episcopal divines," he says, "have learned to distinguish between that great Antichrist and lesser Antichrists, between the Court of Rome and the Church of Rome, which he [Baxter] confounds. I dare not swear that the Pope is that great Antichrist, but I dare swear that I never had any design to bring Popery into England, I hope I never shall have, and that all genuine Episcopal divines may take the same oath."—(*Vind. of the Episc. Clergy. Works*, p. 615). So also Chillingworth, enumerating the questions which have been regarded as open questions, says, "And secondly, for

himself, the author of the following pages would further say, that although he has been for many years fully satisfied that neither the Pope nor the

the remainder [upon a due examination of particulars it will appear] that they, every one of them, have been anciently, without breach of charity, disputed among Protestants; such, for example, were the questions about the Pope's being Antichrist, &c."—*Preface to the Author of Charity maintained*, n. 26, (Works, Lond. 1742, fol.) p. 20.

And that this is plainly understood by our Church to be the case is clearly implied in the words of the Convocation of 1603–4, Can. 30: "Nay, so far was it from the purpose of the Church of England to forsake and reject the Churches of Italy, France, Spain, Germany, or any such like Churches, in all things which they held and practised, it doth with reverence retain those ceremonies, which do neither endanger the Church of God, nor offend the minds of sober men; and only departed from them [i. e., from the Churches of Italy, &c.] in those particular

points wherein they were fallen both from themselves in their ancient integrity, and from the apostolical Churches, which were their first founders."—

This is surely not the language in which we should speak of Antichrist, or followers of Antichrist; and therefore it is plain that our Church does not determine the Churches of Italy, France, Spain, &c., to be in communion with Antichrist, and so cannot require her members or ministers to hold the Pope or his communion to be the Antichrist of Prophecy. See Mede, Epist. 77, where he admits it to be the proper doctrine of our Church to maintain that the Roman Church, much more the Greek, erreth not *in primariis et fundamentalibus fidei articulis*, which is of course equivalent to saying, that we do not hold those Churches to be the great Apostacy, or followers of the Antichrist foretold in prophecy.

Church of Rome are the Antichrist foretold in prophecy, yet he has never, at any time, felt disposed on that account to underrate the evil of Romish corruptions; on the contrary, he has always had the deepest and most serious conviction of the danger of the Roman claims and doctrines, and of the wide-spread evil which they have inflicted, and continue to inflict, on religion and society. But he cannot see in the political claims of the Court of Rome, or in the religious errors, gross and fatal as they are, of the Church of Rome, the characters assigned in prophecy to the Antichrist of the latter times. The Antichrist of the Scriptures is an avowed and unblushing infidel; a blasphemer of Christianity, and of all true religion as such; denying that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, and setting himself up as the object of religious worship: possessed during his reign of all power in earth, and openly trampling upon all law civil and divine. These characteristics do not describe the ecclesiastical power of Rome, nor its religious corruptions: they depict a power wholly different in its very nature, and vastly more extended, as well as more pernicious, in its effects.

There is, therefore, no necessity to underrate the evil of the Romish errors, when we assert that there are errors foretold in prophecy of a character essen-

tially different, and infinitely more mischievous. Nor need the most zealous Protestant be under the smallest apprehension that this assertion will in any way undermine or weaken our defences against Rome. We may still rest on the unanswered and unanswerable arguments of our divines, which have demonstrated the peculiarities of Romanism to be modern corruptions, unknown to holy Scripture, and repugnant to the sense of the old Catholic Fathers and Doctors. This is the true ground on which our Church has maintained and defended the reformation she has effected in religion; on this ground she has always stood and will ever stand: she needs not the aid of such doubtful support as the supposed argument from prophecy against the corruptions of Rome can give; and she can well afford to abandon to others a weapon of controversy, which is at once inconsistent with her own spirit of Catholic moderation, contrary to the recorded judgment of her best divines, and incapable of any solid or satisfactory support from the words of holy Writ.

EXTRACT
FROM THE
REGISTER OF TRINITY COLLEGE,
DUBLIN.

“ Feb. 22, 1794. WHEREAS a legacy of £1243 has been bequeathed to the College of Dublin, by Mrs. Anne Donnellan, of the parish of St. George, Hanover-square, in the county of Middlesex, Spinster, for the encouragement of religion, learning, and good manners ; the particular mode of application being intrusted to the Provost and Senior Fellows :

“ RESOLVED,

“ 1. That a Divinity Lecture, to which shall be annexed a salary arising from the interest of £1200, shall be established for ever, to be called Donnellan's Lecture.

“ 2. That the Lecturer shall be forthwith elected from among the Fellows of the said College, and hereafter annually on the 20th of November.

“ 3. That the subject or subjects of the Lectures shall be determined at the time of election by the Board, to be treated of in six Sermons, which shall be delivered in the College Chapel after Morning Service on certain Sundays, to be appointed on the 20th of November next after the

election of the Lecturer, and within a year from said appointment.

“ 4. That one moiety of the interest of the said £1200 shall be paid to the Lecturer as soon as he shall have delivered the whole number of Lectures, and the other moiety as soon as he shall have published four of the said Lectures; one copy to be deposited in the Library of the College; one in the Library of Armagh; one in the Library of St. Sepulchre; one to be given to the Chancellor of the University; and one to the Provost of the College.”

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STRUCTURE OF THE APOCALYPSE.

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LECTURE III.

THE VISION OF THE BOOK WITH SEVEN SEALS.

REV. vii. 13, 14.

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb.

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LECTURE IV.

THE VISION OF THE SEVEN TRUMPETS.

REV. x. 5-7.

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the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer ; but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets.

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THE PROPHECY OF THE TWO WITNESSES.

REV. xi. 3, 4.

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REV. xii. 17.

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LECTURE I.

B

“Revera Liber erat dignissimus, in quo resignando quis omnes ingenii et industriæ suæ nervos contenderet ; codex utpote fatidicus, seu consiliorum Dei, quo series et ordo rerum gerendarum ad secundum illum et gloriosum Christi adventum pertexebatur. Ejusmodi enim certe esse liquet quæ deinde sequitur gemina rerum futurarum prophetia, quam codex iste continebat. Quæ causa est ni fallor, cur Joannes, visiones suas expositurus, adventus istius gloriosi hypotyposin, tanquam stadii Apocalyptici metam, fronti historiæ suæ præscripserit. *Ecce* (inquit, cap. 1.) *venit cum nubibus, et videbit eum omnis oculus, etiam qui eum transfixerunt: et plangent super eum omnes tribus terræ:* quasi dicat, Hic scopus est, hæc meta, quas narrabo visionum.” Mede Comment. Apocal. Works, Book iii. p. 440.

LECTURE I.

REV. i. 1.

“Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein : for the time is at hand.”

THE obscurity of the Apocalypse, and the failure or uncertainty of every attempt to interpret its predictions, have become common topics of complaint; and considerations derived from this failure of commentators are frequently put forward, in various shapes, to discourage the study or exposition of the prophecy. Sometimes the argument built upon such topics is urged in the way of prudent caution; in which point of view it is not perhaps always undeserving of attention. But sometimes also it assumes a form which seems scarcely reconcileable with a sincere and sober belief in the Divine inspiration of this part of the sacred canon of Holy Writ.

For example :—The attempt to expound the Revelation is sometimes deprecated from its supposed tendency to promote or foster fanatical extravagance; and it cannot be denied, that fanaticism, in all ages, has fixed its stronghold in the symbols

and visions of this mysterious volume. Such considerations, however, should only in fairness be put forward as a warning against the danger of approaching this part of Holy Scripture, in a self-sufficient and fanatical spirit; they can never be made a reason for prohibiting the study of the Apocalypse, to those who come prepared for its perusal in faith, with reverence, and sobriety. We cannot, without impiety, suppose, that a prophecy which has God for its author, can *of itself* have a tendency to make men fanatics^a. Fanatics indeed may and will lay hold of the Apocalyptic visions, and extract from them the baneful poison that fosters their delusions; as the ignorant and unlearned may wrest the other Scriptures also to their own destruction; but this is no ground for prohibiting to the sober-minded Christian the study of this prophecy, unless we would

^a No writer in communion with the Church has expressed himself more objectionably on this point than Dr. Robert South. It is true that the extravagancies which had overthrown our Church and monarchy were then fresh in men's minds; and the indecent abuse which a degrading fanaticism had made of the language of this sacred book was calculated to weaken men's reverence for it. But no palliations of this kind can excuse, from the mouth of a Christian preacher, such language as the following, which seems scarcely reconcilable with a belief in the inspiration of the Apocalypse:—

“Above all, let a man attend to the mind of God, uttered in his revealed word. I say, his revealed word. By which I do not mean that mysterious, extraordinary (and of late so much studied) book, called the Revelation, and which perhaps the more it is studied, the less it is understood, as generally either finding a man cracked, or making him so; but I mean those other writings of the prophets and apostles, which exhibit to us a plain, sure, perfect, and intelligible rule; a rule that will neither fail nor distract such as make use of it.” South’s Sermons, Oxford ed. 1823, vol. ii. p. 184.

also prohibit to him the rest of Holy Scripture ; unless we prohibit also to the astronomer or the naturalist the study of the book of nature, because the revelations of science are themselves no less liable to the perversions of insanity or of enthusiasm.

Again, it is further often urged, that even men of piety, and sobriety, and learning, have been led into extravagance by the study of the Apocalypse, and have sought to find in its visions the passing or coming events of the times in which they live ; to predict from it the times and seasons which God has reserved in His own power ; and to foretel the period at which the end of the world, or of this present dispensation, may be expected.

To this it might be enough to answer, that men of piety and learning are subject to like error and infirmity as other men ; but their weaknesses of this kind are no more a discouragement to the study of the Apocalypse, than of any other part of Holy Scripture. In so far then as the objection is directed against the study of unfulfilled prophecy in general, I shall not here reply to it ; because the question now before us is the particular one, whether there is any such especial danger or presumption in the attempt to understand the Apocalypse, as to deter us from the perusal of it, or to render the inquiry into its meaning an improper subject for a Christian pulpit.

The failure of former interpreters,—of such men, for example, as Joseph Mede and Hammond, of Sir Isaac Newton and Vitringa, of Bossuet and Bishop

Lloyd, of Bengel, Wetstein, Faber, and a host of others;—the failure, I say, of such expositors, is no doubt a proof that the subject is surrounded with most serious difficulties. It cannot, however, be taken as a sufficient reason for pronouncing the Apocalypse inexplicable, or all attempts to interpret it presumptuous and vain.

For if the Apocalypse be inexplicable, in such a sense, that without another revelation its real meaning is undiscoverable, then we must either suppose that it is inexplicable *for the present*, until its predictions be fulfilled; or else that it is *in its own nature* unintelligible, and incapable of any sober or rational interpretation.

The latter of these suppositions is manifestly inconsistent with the belief of the Church in the Divine inspiration and canonical authority of the Prophecy; since it is impossible to conceive that a rhapsody, in itself unmeaning, and incapable of any rational sense, should have proceeded from the pen of an inspired writer^b.

^b Some such reason as this appears to have influenced those in ancient times of whom Dionysius speaks, who rejected the Apocalypse: Τινὲς μὲν οὖν τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν ἠθέτησαν καὶ ἀνισκιάσαν πάντῃ τὸ βιβλίον, καθ' ἕκαστον κειφάλαιον διευθύνοντες, ἄγνωστον τε καὶ ἀσυλλόγιστον ἀποφαίνοντες. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. vii. cap. 25. The celebrated saying attributed to Jos. Scaliger (Scaligerana 2da. p. 41, quoted by Bp. Newton), *Calvinus sapit, quod*

in Apocalypsim non scripsit, may also be taken as an example of the popular way of speaking of the Apocalypse alluded to above. No doubt every one is wise who refrains from writing on what he either does not understand, or is incapable of understanding. But the same Scaliger who is reported to have commended Calvin's wisdom in not commenting on the Apocalypse, is represented as saying, in the same breath: *O quam Cal-*

The other supposition therefore remains, namely, that the Apocalypse is inexplicable, not in itself,

vinus bene assequitur mentem prophetarum! nemo melius!

The compliment therefore is paid to Calvin at the expense of the Apocalypse. For unless the prophecy be in itself unintelligible, how is it a proof of wisdom, in a person possessed of every qualification, to refrain from commenting upon it? All this goes far to indicate a secret unbelief in the Divine authority and inspiration of this sacred book.

It is hardly fair, however, to make Jos. Scaliger responsible for every thing that is put into his mouth in such a work as the Scaligerana; and another sentiment ascribed to him, where he boasts of understanding the Apocalypse, and calls it a book *vere canonicus*, is inconsistent with the former. This is also quoted by Bishop Newton (Diss. xxiv.) from the Scaligerana lma. a work of somewhat better authority than the Scaligerana 2da. Certain, however, it is, that the early Swiss reformers, and even Luther himself, were, at the beginning of the Reformation, inclined to reject the Apocalypse. Calvin is reported to have said that the author of the book was unknown, and that he did not understand the prophecy: at least Bodinus tells the following story of him (Method. Histor. cap. 7, p. 310. Amst. 1650. 12mo.): "Ac valde mihi probatur Calvini non minus ur-

bana quam prudens oratio; qui de libro Apocalypseos sententiam rogatus, ingenue respondit, se penitus ignorare quid velit tam obscurus scriptor, qui qualisque fuerit nondum constat inter eruditos." But nothing of this sort appears in Calvin's writings. In his *Institutiones*, and other genuine works, he cites the Apocalypse in proof of his doctrine, with as much respect, and assigns to it as much authority, as to the other Scriptures. But that other reformers of the Swiss school were disposed to undervalue the book of Revelation is undeniable. Thus Zuinglius (answering the argument urged from Rev. v. 8, to prove that the saints in heaven pray for us) says, "Apocalypseos liber, teste Hieronymo, inter canonicos libros a veteribus non est numeratus. Præterea a nullo doctorum evangelistæ Joanni, sed alii cuidam, Ephesiorum episcopo adscriptus. Possem ergo testimonia citata (si velim) rejicere, sed nihil est opus. Maneat suo loco Apocalypsis, verba vero adducta hunc sensum quem vos extorquere conanimi non habent. Voluit Joannes ille, quisquis tandem fuerit, &c." Zuingl. Oper. tom. i. p. 54, fol. Tugur. 1581.

So also Ecolampadius, in his letter to the Waldenses, sent in reply to their inquiries by the Barb George Morell, and dated "Basilee, 13 Octobris,

but relatively, and only while its prophecies are unfulfilled. If this be so, it will follow that until we are assured of the fulfilment of the prophecy, it is not only vain but wrong to attempt its interpretation; and that in the mean time the Apocalypse is to be regarded as a portion of Scripture whose use is interdicted to the Church.

But the express words of the book itself contradict this hypothesis. They tell us that the revelation of futurity which it contains, was given to the Church for this especial purpose, "to shew unto God's servants the things which must shortly come to pass^c." It is evident, therefore, that we are not obliged to wait for the fulfilment of the prophecy, in order to derive from this sacred volume the instruction which it was intended to convey: its

1530," speaking of the canon of Scripture as received by the reformed in his time, says, "In novo testamento quatuor evangelia, cum Actis Apostolorum, et quatuordecim epistolis Pauli, et septem catholicis, una cum Apocalypsi, recipimus; tametsi Apocalypsim, cum epistola Jacobi, et Judæ, et ultima Petri, ac duabus posterioribus Joannis, non cum cæteris conferamus." *Epistolæ Doctor. Viror.* edited by Theod. Bibliander, fol. [s. l.] 1548, p. 3, c. And even Luther, in the preface to the Apocalypse, published in the first edition of his German New Testament, speaks disparagingly of the authority of this

book (See Bullinger in Apoc. p. 2, Basil, fol. 1557), although he afterwards withdrew this preface; and, as it would seem, changed his opinion on the subject; but he continued still to doubt whether St. John was the author of the Apocalypse; and the same doubt is expressed also by Erasmus, in Apoc. xxii. The influence of Beza, however, appears to have soon after dispelled these doubts among the reformed. In the Prolegomena to the Apocalypse, in his Annotations on the N. T., he has replied to the objections of Erasmus, and strongly advocated the orthodox opinion.

^c Rev. i. 1, xxii. 6.

Divine Author has expressly assured us that it was intended to make known to us future events: and therefore, we are surely guilty of no presumption or impiety, when we endeavour in a spirit of faith and humility to discover its real meaning, even though we be assured that its fulfilment is as yet to come.

Again, I would refer you to the passage I have selected as my text, for an additional and unanswerable proof that the Apocalypse was intended for the present use of the Church, and that we are guilty of no presumption in attempting to understand its prophecies.

A blessing is there pronounced by the Almighty Himself, on all that read, and all that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein. Is it possible to suppose that such a blessing would be promised to the study of this book, if its words were in themselves unintelligible, and incapable of being understood? Does not the very fact that such a blessing has been promised, fully sanction all fair and legitimate attempts to discover its real meaning; and render it the express duty of the Christian Church to study the prophecy, lest she should seem to despise that blessing which is promised to its perusal^d?

^d Vitranga draws the same inference from the promised blessing on the study of the Apocalypse: "Supposuit Apostolus et propheta dum hæc scripsit, librum hunc suum

cum fructu legi ac intelligi posse, atque adeo recte facere qui se ad illum legendum, intelligendum, meditandum applicant; ut si forte non omnia, saltem aliqua, assequantur; legentes

I conclude, therefore, that notwithstanding the real difficulties of the prophecy,—notwithstanding the want of success that has attended the labours of the pious and learned commentators on the Apocalypse whose writings are in our hands,—there is nothing in the nature of this Prophecy itself which should lead us to suppose the study of it interdicted to the Christian Church, or its real meaning impenetrably sealed; that, on the contrary, it was intended by its Divine Author to make known to His servants the things that must be done hereafter; inasmuch as He has expressly promised a peculiar blessing “to him that readeth and to them that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein^e.”

autem, audientes, meditantes, expectent patienter maiorem Spiritus S. lucem, maioremque etiam progressum temporum mundi et ecclesiæ, qui dubia et obscura multa sit expediturus. Absit igitur in *eorum concedamus sententiam qui librum hunc non interpretari malunt*; quam viro alicui docto nuper publice visum est laudare. Qui serio credit, revelationem hanc a Jesu Christo datam et a Spiritu S. inspiratam esse, in hunc sensum venire non potest cum ratione. Abstineat prophetia hac publice *interpretanda*, cui hic sedet animus: sed an legenda quoque, meditanda, ruminanda? num alios etiam ab ea meditanda ac interpretanda ausit abducere aut detertere? an publico persuasum velle, nulla

omnino visa et emblemata huius libri huc usque ad usum publicum exposita esse? aliorum labores noxio gravare præiudicio? omne studium et profectum bonorum ingeniorum in libro hoc intelligendo positum sufflaminare? Qui id fecerit, quocunque obtentu fecerit, (quem alibi examinabo:) Joanni apostolo huius Libri scriptori in os obloquitur; et se manifestum facit vel ignaviæ, vel erga verbum propheticum et erga prophetiam huius Libri irreverentiæ.” Anacrisis Apocal. p. 10, 11, Amst. 1719, 4to.

^e If the conjecture of Sir Isaac Newton be allowed, that St. Peter, when he speaks of “a more sure word of prophecy,” alludes to the Apocalypse, an additional argument

My object, however, in the present course of Lectures will be, not to put forward any new opinion or novel interpretation of the Apocalypse, but to inquire into the causes and to suggest the remedy of that failure, which seems to have been the fate of almost all its commentators: a failure which is evinced by the acknowledged fact, that exposition after exposition has passed away into obscurity; producing no impression on the faith of the Church; refuted perhaps in most cases by time itself; changed and retracted even by the author; or its very existence forgotten, if not in the life-time of the author, at least by the generation that followed.

If, therefore, we can succeed in detecting the causes of this failure: if we can discover any common principles, which there is reason to suspect may be erroneous, and which are assumed as the basis of their reasonings by all the popular expositors of the prophecy, we shall have made one step at least towards the discovery of the truth. It may be, that we shall not even yet be able to clear up all difficulties, or on all points to satisfy even ourselves, that we have attained to the true interpretation: but something will at least be effected: and the detection of even one erroneous principle may ultimately lead to the discovery of others whose existence we may not

will be obtained for the study of a prophecy, to which the inspired Apostle St. Peter tells the Churches of Asia, "ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark

place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." (2 Pet. i. 19). See Sir Isaac Newton, *Observ. on the Apocal.* p. 238. Dublin. 1733. 8vo.

now suspect, and which may be found to lurk unheeded in our reasonings, and to lead us to conclusions far distant from the truth.

For this purpose, it will be necessary, in the first instance, to lay before you a short historical account of the different systems of interpretation that have been popular in ancient and modern times, confining myself, of course, to a notice of their fundamental or characteristic differences. And then, secondly, we shall be the better prepared to enter upon an examination of the visions of the Apocalypse themselves; and to lay down one or two fundamental principles, which I would propose for your consideration, as necessary to be kept in view, in order to the recovery of the real meaning of the prophecy.

In the remainder of this discourse, I shall endeavour to discuss, as briefly as may be consistent with being intelligible, the former of these subjects; and to make some observations on the more remarkable characteristic principles of interpretation that have been sanctioned by expositors of the Apocalypse, and popularly adopted in different ages of the Church.

Of the manner in which the Apocalypse was understood by the contemporaries of its author and their immediate successors, scarcely any traces now remain. In that age no regular commentaries on the books of Holy Scripture were composed^f, and all that

^f St. Jerome (*De viris illustr.* c. 9), seems to say that commentaries on the Apocalypse were written by Justin Martyr

and Irenæus: "Quarto decimo igitur anno secundam post Neronem persecutionem movente Domitiano, in Patmos insulam

remains to us of the interpretations then received in the Church, must be gathered from such passing allusions or incidental quotations as may occur in the scanty relics of the Christian literature of the period, which the providence of God has preserved to us. There exists, however, very distinct and unquestionable evidence, that at the beginning of the third century, *a change* began in the popular interpretations of the Apocalypse; and that opinions, which had been commonly derived from it, and which had been adopted as the undoubted testimony of the Scripture, by Irenæus, by Tertullian, by Justin Martyr, were then for the first time questioned, and ultimately ceased to hold the place which once they had occupied in the tradition and teaching of the Church⁵.

relegatus, scripsit Apocalypsim, quam interpretatur Justinus Martyr et Irenæus." But it is doubted with much reason by commentators on St. Jerome, whether it can be meant that regular expositions of the Apocalypse were composed by those fathers: the meaning seems to be that St. Justin Martyr and St. Irenæus were regarded as the authors of the traditional interpretation of the Apocalypse, which had been handed down in the Church from their times. In his account of their writings St. Jerome attributes no such works to them. See Tillemont, *Memoires*. St. John. Note 10.

⁵ It is admitted (See Mosheim

De rebus Christ. ante Const., sec. iii. s. 38, p. 721, 722), that the earliest Christian writers adopted the literal interpretation of the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse, on which the doctrine of the personal reign of Christ on earth, for a thousand years, before the day of judgment, has been founded. We may, therefore, infer that the general character of the ancient interpretation of the Apocalypse was the literal sense; and so indeed St. Jerome expressly tells us, *Præf. ad lib. xviii. in Isaiam*. (See the passage quoted hereafter, note 1, p. 17). The change, therefore, which took place in the opinions of the majority of Chris-

This change is to be attributed to a cause which has often proved a source of error, and of which there are many instances to be found in the history of Christian doctrine. I mean the reaction produced by an abuse or exaggeration of a Scriptural truth, which has so commonly led to the abandonment or modification of the truth itself; and the fear of one

tian doctors, as to the doctrine of the Millennium, must be taken as necessarily implying a correspondent change in their interpretation of the Apocalypse. The earliest writer, whose works are now extant, by whom the ancient opinions were openly impugned, was Origen, at the beginning of the third century: and his censure of the advocates of the Millennium is, that they were disciples of the letter, led only by that signification of words which was apparent on the surface, and refusing the labour of a deeper understanding (De Princ. ii. 11, 2): all which confirms what has been said, that the ancient exposition of the Apocalypse was essentially *literal*. In the middle of the same century (A. D. 247), Dionysius of Alexandria, a disciple of Origen, wrote against Nepos a book of which Eusebius has preserved the substance; for the work itself is unfortunately lost. He did not venture, he tells us, to reject the Apocalypse, as some had done; but he admitted that he did not understand it, and hinted that some hidden sense should be looked for in its

words: 'Εγὼ δὲ ἀβήτησαι μὲν οὐκ ἂν τολμήσαιμι τὸ βιβλίον· πολλῶν αὐτὸ διὰ σπουδῆς ἔχόντων ἀδιλφῶν· μίζονα δὲ τῆς ἑμαυτοῦ φρονήσεως τὴν ὑπόληψιν τὴν περὶ αὐτοῦ λαμβάνων, κεκρυμμένην εἶναι τινὰ καὶ θαυμασιωτέραν τὴν καθ' ἑκάστον ἐκδοχὴν ὑπολαμβάνων. Καὶ γὰρ εἰ μὴ συνίημι, ἀλλ' ὑπονοῶ γε οὖν τινὰ βαθύτερον ἐγκρίσθαι τοῖς ῥήμασιν. οὐκ ἰδίῳ ταῦτα μετρῶν καὶ κρίων λογισμῶ, πίστις δὲ πλείον ἡμῶν, ὑψηλότερα ἢ ὑπ' ἐμοῦ καταληφθῆναι νομίζω. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. vii. c. 25.

Still, however, the ancient doctrine prevailed for a century later. In the fourth century we find it embraced (not in the way of a peculiar opinion, but in language which implies that it was then the received doctrine of the Church) by Lactantius, by St. Martin of Tours, and by St. Sulpitius Severus. In the fifth century St. Jerome and St. Augustine tell us that there were many, nay a majority, of orthodox Christians who looked for a literal Millennium. St. Augustine himself once held the doctrine, as he tells us, De Civit. Dei, lib. xx. c. 7; and there is one of his sermons (259 in the Be-

extreme either in doctrine or practice, which is so frequently the occasion of our running into the other.

The gross and sensual errors attributed by Eusebius and others, to certain ancient advocates of the Millenniumⁿ, were professedly derived from the Apocalypse ; and although it might easily be shown that the carnal doctrines said to have been advocated by

nedictine edition), still extant, in which he has distinctly put forward the ancient opinion of the reign of Christ on earth with His saints : “ *Regnabit enim Dominus in terra cum sanctis suis, sicut dicunt Scripturæ, et habebit hic ecclesiam, quo nullus malus intrabit, separatam atque purgatam ab omni contagione nequitiae.*” We may therefore fairly infer that the ancient literal interpretation of the Apocalypse, which led to the expectation of a Millennium, *began* to be questioned in the third century : but that it continued in the tradition of the Church till the beginning of the fifth century, when it appears to have been merged as a Scriptural truth, in the superior charms of the figurative interpretations. In later ages when various views of purgatory became prevalent in popular teaching, no place was left for the reign of Christ on earth with His saints, preparatory to their admission into the glory of the Father : and hence it is that the doctrine of the Millennium is generally regarded as heretical by Divines of the modern Church of Rome.

See an excellent statement of the views entertained by the early fathers on the Millennial reign of Christ, in Note D of the English Translation of Tertullian's Apology (p. 120, sq.), published in the Library of the Fathers, Oxford, 1842. See also Lambert, *Exposition des Prédications et des Promesses faites à l'Eglise*, chap. 16, Paris, 1806. Lacunza, *Venida del Messias*, Part I. chap. v., and Eruvin, or Miscellaneous Essays, London, 1831, Essay vii. p. 158, et sq.

^h As for example, to Cerinthus, whom Eusebius accuses of having placed the happiness of the Millennial state in sensual delights ; *γαστρός καὶ τῶν ὑπὸ γαστέρα πλησμοναῖς*. Hist. Eccl. i. vii. c. 25. Mosheim, however, with much reason, considers this a gross misrepresentation. *De rebus Christianor. ante Constant. sæc. i. s. 70*, p. 199. Eusebius ascribes opinions of the same kind to Nepos, an Egyptian Bishop : *τινα χιλιάδα ἑτῶν τρυφῆς σωματικῆς ἐπὶ τῆς ξηραῖς ταύτης ἵσθαι ὑποτιθέμενος*. (Hist. Eccl. i. vii. c. 24). But it is incredible, if this were the character of his

these heresiarchs, did by no means follow from even the most literal interpretation of the prophecy, and were widely different from the views of the Millennium entertained by the orthodox fathers of the second century; yet it would seem that these latter views were discountenanced, either from being confounded with the heretical opinions, or from being regarded as *tending* to heresy, inasmuch as they were known to have furnished the heretical Millenarians with the premisses from which their peculiar errors were derived¹.

teaching, that Nepos could have been spoken of in terms of respect, such as Eusebius himself records, by such a writer as St. Dionysius of Alexandria, who is reported to have said, *ἐν ἄλλοις μὲν πολλοῖς ἀποδέχομαι καὶ ἀγαπῶ Νέπωτα . . . καὶ πάνυ δι' αἰδοῦς ἄγω τὸν ἄνθρωπον.* (Euseb. *ibid.*) It is very probable, however, that his followers misrepresented his doctrines, and perverted his teaching into the gross and carnal notions of the Millennium which Eusebius has so strongly reprobated.

¹ Thus we find at the present day how many there are who reject the plain doctrine of Holy Scripture on the intermediate state of the saints, from a fear of the Romish doctrine of purgatory. Purgatory, they seem to reason, implies an intermediate state. The doctrine of an intermediate state is the foundation of the doctrine of purgatory. If, therefore, the former doctrine be abandoned,

every notion of a purgatory must, as a necessary consequence, fall to the ground. Thus persons who are zealous against the Romish doctrine of purgatory, become zealous also, without intending to resist the word of God, against the Scriptural doctrine of the intermediate state. This latter doctrine seems to them a stepping stone to the former; and all who hold it are regarded as so far nearer to Popery, and *tending*, if not inclined, to the adoption of the Romish error. To those who are thus minded, the following passage from one of Jos. Mede's letters may perhaps be useful: "To be nearer or further off from the *Man of Sin* is not (I think) the measure of truth and falsehood, nor that which would be most destructive of him always true and warrantable. If it be, there be some in the world that would be more orthodox reformed Christians than any of us. The

Thus the religious dread of heresy, and, perhaps, also the difficulty of distinguishing, in a manner intelligible to the vulgar, between a popular error and the truth of which it is the perversion, led, in course of time, to the almost total abandonment of the original interpretation of the *Apocalypse*; which, even in St. Jerome's time, continued to be followed by the majority of Christians¹.

Socinians, you know, deny that souls live after death, until the resurrection; or that Christ hath *carnem et sanguinem* now in heaven; both as most destructive of the idolatrous errors of the *Man of Sin* :” [i. e. Romanism]; “the first of purgatory and invocation of saints (which they say can never be solidly everted, as long as it is supposed souls do live); the other of transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Is not this to undermine *Anti-christ* with a vengeance, as they say?” Mede's Works, Book iv. Epist. 98, p. 883.

Thus St. Jerome, in one place expresses fear lest he should bring odium upon himself by venturing to put forth his own doctrine of the figurative Millennium; and tells us, that the literal interpretation of the *Apocalypse* was held, not only by many of the ancients, but by the majority (*plurima multitudo*) of the orthodox of his own time. “*Quam* (sc. *Apocalypsin*) *si juxta literam accipimus, judaizandum est, si spiritaliter, ut scripta est, disse-*

rimus, multorum veterum videbimur opinionibus contraire: Latinorum, Tertulliani, Victorini, Lactantii; Græcorum, ut ceteros prætermittam, Irenæi tantum Lugdunensis Episcopi faciam mentionem;” then, having mentioned the substance of the book written by Dionysius of Alexandria, against Nepos, and the gross Millenarians, he adds, “*Cui* (sc. *Dionysio*) *duobus voluminibus respondit Apollinarius, quem non solum suæ sectæ homines, sed et nostrorum in hac parte duntaxat plurima sequitur multitudo, ut præsaga mente jam cernam quantorum in me rabies concitanda sit.*” Præf. ad lib. xviii. in *Isaiam*. And in another place, speaking of the literal Millennium, he says, “*Quæ licet non sequamur, tamen damnare non possumus, quia multi ecclesiasticorum virorum et martyres ista dixerunt.*” (In *Jerem. xix. 10, 11.*) Yet it is manifest that St. Jerome in these places confounds the carnal or Judaizing doctrine opposed by Dionysius, with the doctrine of Irenæus, Tertullian, &c., which was nevertheless widely different, as their wri-

There were but two ways of escaping from the doctrine of the Millennium as it is taught by the letter of the Apocalypse; either to reject the prophecy altogether as apocryphal, and unworthy of an inspired author; or else to abandon the literal interpretation of it. The former of these two modes of evading the difficulty, seems to have been adopted chiefly in the Oriental Church*, where the carnal and Judaizing form of Millenarianism had always more perniciously manifested itself. But in the West, where the influence of the Millenarian heresy was less sensibly felt, it was not thought necessary to deny the canonical authority of a book, which all preceding ages had agreed to reverence as given by inspiration of God:—it was deemed enough to assert, that Millenarian errors were deducible from the Apocalypse, only by a too servile adherence to the letter; that the literal interpretation was therefore to be abandoned, and a figurative or allegorical exposition to be sought for.

Upon these principles were constructed, the earliest commentaries now extant on the book of Revelation; in which it is considered, not, properly speaking, as a *prophecy*, but as an *allegory*; not as a prediction

tings, still extant, sufficiently testify. See note^o, p. 61, of Discourses on the Prophecies relating to Antichrist, &c.

* St. Jerome tells us, that the Greeks in his time did not receive the Apocalypse (Ep. 129, ad Dardanum, n. 3.) St. Cyrill of Jerusalem (Cat. iv. n. 36), and St. Gregory Nazianz.

(Carm. xxxiii., p. 98), omit it in their catalogues of the canonical books; the latter adds, after enumerating the other books, *Εἴ τι δὲ τούτων ἐκτός, οὐκ ἐν γνησίοις.* St. Chrysostom does not so much as once quote it in all his voluminous writings. See Tillemont, Mémoires; Saint John. Note 9.

of actual events yet future, but as a *mythos*, representing a moral truth¹.

¹ As a specimen of this class of interpreters, and to show how entirely the idea of a *prophecy* was lost, take the following abstract of the exposition given by Berengaudus of the seven seals.

The first seal, he tells us, relates to the history of the world before the deluge. The Lamb opened this first seal, when the grace of the Holy Ghost made known to the Doctors of the Church, the spiritual understanding of the events before the deluge. The white horse signifies the righteous who lived in that period. He that sat on the horse is Christ. The bow is his vengeance against Cain, and the ungodly of that age. The crown given unto him, has the same signification as the horse on which he sat, viz., the righteous who lived before the deluge.

The second seal relates to the building of the ark, and to the period from the deluge to the law. The red horse signifies the righteous of that period, who are represented by the red colour, either as gold, from their preciousness, or as blood, from the persecutions they underwent. He that sat on the horse, is Christ. It was given to him to take peace from the earth, i. e., the ungodly peace which existed between the righteous and the wicked, when the sons of God took of the daughters of men, which was the immediate cause of the deluge. The great

sword given unto him, denotes the deluge.

The third seal relates to the law, and those who lived under the law. The black horse denotes the doctors of the law : black to signify the obscurity and burdensome character of the law. He that sat on the horse is Christ. The balances denote the rigid equity of the law, as it is written, *Exod. xxi. 23*, "Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, &c." The voice in the midst of the four beasts, is the voice of the Church crying for mercy. The two measures of wheat (*bilibris tritici*, as the vulgate reads) are the Old and New Testaments. The penny is Christ, because it is of the omnipotence, goodness, and justice of God only, that the Scripture speaks. The three measures of barley, are the good works of the saints, which are sold for a penny, because whatever we do or suffer, it is for Christ's sake. [A second interpretation of this seal is also given, which, as it is of the same character, we need not stop to describe].

The fourth seal relates to the prophets, who foretold the birth of Christ, His passion and resurrection, and the call of the Gentiles. Christ opens the fourth seal, when He gives to the doctors of His Church, the understanding of the prophets. The pale horse, our author assumes to mean the prophets; although he admits that it seems to refer

In the visions of the Apocalypse, the ancient commentators beheld not a prophetic history of the

to antichrist ("videntur hæc quæ de equite quarto dicuntur, ad antichristum pertinere: sed quia superiores tres equites in bonam partem interpretati sumus, ut convenirent cum apertionibus trium sigillorum, ordinis rectitudo cogit, ut et istum in bonam partem intelligamus.") The horse is pale, because the prophets denounced woe, lamentation, and war. The rider is Christ; who is here said to have the name of Death, "quia Israelitico populo peccanti mortem intulit." Hell followed Him, "quia omnes qui comminationes prophetarum, quas ex ore Domini ad populum protulerant, contempserunt, infernus absorbuit."

The remaining three seals relate to the New Testament, as the first four related to the Old. Because the promises of the law were earthly and carnal, confined to the *four* elements, and, therefore, represented in *four* seals. But the New Testament revealing to us the doctrine of the Trinity, was aptly portrayed in *three* seals.

Our Lord opened the fifth, sixth, and seventh seals, when He spake to us in parables, and taught them to the doctors of the Church. The fifth seal relates to the martyrs, and was opened when Christ spake those parables and sayings, which forewarned His disciples of their martyrdom, and when He admitted them into heavenly glory.

The altar under which the souls of the martyrs were seen, is Christ. The white robes are the glory of the saints.

The opening of the sixth seal is the rejection of the Jews, and the call of the Gentiles; and took place when Christ spake His parables on that subject, and made known their meaning to the doctors of His Church. The earthquake is the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. The sun is the Jewish nation; and became black as sackcloth, the emblem of repentance, to show that the Jews were rejected for their sins. The moon is also the Jewish nation; and became as blood, to show that the Jews were destroyed for having shed the blood of Christ. The stars are the chief priests, scribes, and pharisees. Heaven is the Old Testament, which departed as a scroll, to show that the Old Testament, was rolled up, and, therefore, could no longer be read or understood by the Jews. The mountains and islands were moved, i. e., the Jews were taken from the cities and villages of Judæa, and scattered over the earth. The terror of the kings of the earth, &c., denoted the miseries attendant on the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. The four angels holding the winds, denote the Romans; in whom was centered the power of the four ancient empires of the Assyrians, Persians, Mace-

Christian Church or empire, so much as a figurative representation of the contest going on in the world, or in the heart of the individual Christian, between the evil and the good; and the moral of the book, the end for which it was given, according to the spirit of these interpretations, was to assure the righteous of their ultimate triumph, notwithstanding the apparent or temporary success of the powers of darkness.

The great objection, however, to all such systems is, that the Revelation, so considered, is no longer a prophecy; its design is, not the prediction of the future, but the encouragement and support of the Church, under the assaults of heresy, and tyranny,

donians, and Romans. The other angel (Rev. vii. 2) is Christ. The seal of the living God is His deity. He calls to the four angels to cease from hurting the earth, i. e., at the spread of Christianity the power of the Romans to hurt the earth declined. The 144,000 sealed, are the elect of the Church.

The opening of the seventh seal is the nativity of Christ; which is reserved for the seventh seal, because the seventh day was the sabbath of the Lord, and Christ is our rest. The silence in heaven is the peace which prevailed over all the earth, at the birth of Christ; and there was silence for but half an hour, because no peace which the Church enjoys under the heathen can be of long duration.

It is needless to pursue our

author farther; a sufficient specimen has been given, to enable the reader to understand the spirit of this class of commentators; and to prove the truth of what has been said, that the Apocalypse, in their hands, was no longer a *prophecy*, but a religious *mythos*. Berengaudus, supposed to be Berengaud de Ferrieres, was a writer probably of the ninth century; his commentary on the Apocalypse was attributed to St. Ambrose, in the Paris edition of that father's works, 1548: but the Benedictine editors have corrected this error. It is printed in the Benedictine edition of the works of St. Ambrose, tom. ii. Appendix, col. 499, sq.

Some similar specimens of the ancient commentaries will be given in note A. at the end of the volume.

and persecution. How then are we to explain those passages in which St. John describes himself as commanded to write the things which must be hereafter? in which he speaks of the time of the fulfilment as approaching? in which he proclaims himself a prophet, by adopting the style and language of the ancient prophets?

But the allegorical school of interpreters had admitted into their theories, another principle, by which the prophetic character of the Apocalypse was in a great degree preserved, and which harmonized, without much difficulty, with the mystical interpretation. The opinion that the design of the prophecy was to represent the momentous contest between good and evil; the contest going on in all ages between the Church and the world, between Catholicity and heresy, truth and falsehood, gave a wide scope to the expositor who desired to apply the Apocalyptic visions to any particular struggle in which he himself, or the age in which he lived, was engaged. Accordingly we find mingled with the general allegorical interpretation, particular applications of distinct visions, or portions of visions, to certain special heresies, local persecutions, or other events, which, from their proximity, or any other cause, appeared to the expositor to assume a peculiar interest or importance in the history of the Church. The Apocalypse was regarded as a mine of deep and admirable mysteries: every symbol, every letter, was looked upon as con-

cealing some momentous prediction^m, capable of application to a multitude of events, between which any the most remote resemblance might be traced throughout the lapse of ages; the secret rise, for example, of heresies; the patience and faith of the saints in persecution; or the triumph of the Church in some signal deliverance. Still, however, these applications of the Apocalyptic symbols, even when made to particular historical events, were made rather as expositions or illustrations of an allegory, than as fulfilments of a definite prediction. The order of the prophetic visions and their connexion with each other, were not supposed to indicate the chronological order of the events foretold: it was enough if the symbol was found capable of being applied to the particular heresy or persecution, to the particular pestilence, or massacre, or famine, with which the commentator was anxious to connect it.

This may be taken as a general account of the popular expositions of the Apocalypse which were current in the Church, from the fourth to the thirteenth century; at which last period another important change was effected, and the historical interpretations assumed a more precise, and a more systematic form. In other words, the Apocalypse came then to be regarded as a *chronological prediction* of the

^m St. Jerome has expressed this feeling in a passage of his writings that has often been quoted: "Apocalypsis Joannis tot habet sacramenta quot verba. Parum dixi pro merito vo-

luminis. Laus omnis inferior est; in verbis singulis multiplices latent intelligentiæ." Epist. 53, ad Paulinum, de studio Scripturarum, n. 8. Ed. Valarsii.

fates and fortunes of the empire and of the Church ; and the notion of a moral allegory, although it still remained and mingled itself with the historical application, yet gradually lost its ground, and at length was almost entirely abandoned.

The beginnings of this change may very probably be traced to the political use that was made of the Apocalypse, in the contests between rival claimants for the chair of St. Peter ; and at a later period, in the celebrated conflict between the Papal and the Imperial power. It is painful to add, that examples of this irreverent abuse of the sacred words of prophecy are to be found in the works of the most pious writers of that ageⁿ ; and that in the fatal col-

ⁿ On the death of Honorius II., A. D. 1130, the contending parties at Rome elected two rival Popes ; Gregory, Cardinal de St. Angelo, who took the title of Innocent ; and Peter Leo, Cardinal de Sta. Maria trans Tyberim, who took the name of Anacletus II. and occupied the Vatican. The cause of Innocent was warmly advocated by St. Bernard, who in a letter to Hildebert, Archbishop of Tours, written about A. D. 1131, freely applies the prophecies to prejudice the cause of Leo.—“ Ecce namque christus Domini iste Innocentius positus est in ruinam et in resurrectionem multorum. Nam qui Dei sunt, libenter junguntur ei ; qui autem ex adverso stat, aut Antichristi est, aut Antichristus. Cernitur abominatio stare in loco sancto [alluding to Leo

having kept possession of the Vatican], quem ut obtineret, incendit ignis sanctuarium Dei, &c.”—Epist. cxxiv. In another letter, written the same year, to Geoffrey of Loroux, he says, “Tempus faciendi nunc, quia dissipaverunt legem. Bestia illa de Apocalypsi, cui datum est os loquens blasphemias, et bellum gerere cum sanctis, Petri cathedram occupat, tanquam leo [a play upon the name of Peter Leo] paratus ad prædam.” Epist. cxxv. And again, in a letter to the Bishops of Aquitaine, written A. D. 1132, he says, “Audet (quod et flens dico), inimicus crucis Christi suis sedibus pellere sanctos, qui nolunt bestiam adorare, quæ aperuit os suum in blasphemias, blasphemare nomen Dei, et tabernaculum ejus.”—Ep. cxxv. ; n. 7. “Velimus, nolumus, im-

lision between Gregory IX., and the Emperor Frederick, in the thirteenth century, the application of prophecy to the purposes of political warfare was first made by the advocates of the Church.

The Pope himself denounced the Emperor as the forerunner of Antichrist; the beast rising up out of the sea, full of names of blasphemy; whose feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and who opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His Name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. The Emperor retorted by declaring the Pope to be the great Dragon, which deceiveth the whole world; the Antichrist whose coming was foretold; the angel of the bottomless pit; a Balaam, hired to curse God's people by a bribe from the Prince of Darkness°.

pleri quandoque necesse est veritatem Spiritus Sancti, fierique illam quæ prophetico spiritu prænuntiata legitur in Scripturis discessio: sed væ homini per quem venit."—Ibid n. 8. See Discourses on the Prophecies relating to Antichrist, &c., note^a, p. 43. It is very probable, however, that St. Bernard, with his high views of the dignity and supremacy of the Roman see, may have regarded the forcible occupation of the Vatican by an usurper of the Papal chair, as a real fulfilment of prophecy. This may acquit him of irreverence in the use made of the awful predictions to which he alludes, but it cannot justify us in quoting his authority for similar appli-

cations of the words of prophecy. Ancient writers, even down to the era of the Reformation, allowed themselves great laxity in this kind of applications of Holy Scripture; so that we can scarcely draw any safe conclusion as to their real opinions of the meaning of prophecy from their use of insulated texts.

° The Letter of Pope Gregory IX. here alluded to, is dated "12 Kal. Junii, Pontiff. nostri anno decimo tertio," i. e., 1239. It was sent, as Matthew Paris tells us, to all princes and prelates (principibus et prælatibus terrarum), "ut ipsum [sc. Fridericum imperatorem] damnablem toti mundo redderet et infamem." The copy preserved

The example thus set by persons in such high authority, was eagerly followed by a host of inferior

by Matthew Paris, is that which was sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury and his suffragans; it begins thus, "Ascendit de mari bestia, blasphemie plena nominibus, quæ pedibus ursi, et leonis ore desæviens, ac membris formata cæteris sicut pardus, os suum in blasphemias divini Nominis aperit, tabernaculum ejus et sanctos, qui in cœlis habitant, similibus impetere jaculis non omittit. Hæc unguibus et dentibus ferreis cuncta confringere, et suis pedibus universa desiderans conculcare, fidei occultos olim paravit arietes, et nunc apertas machinas instruit Ismaelitarum, gignasia animas avertentia construit, et in Christum humani generis Redemptorem (cujus testamenti tabulas stylo pravitatis hæreticæ nititur abolere, fama testante), consurgit. Igitur admirari desinite omnes, ad quos ab hac bestia contra nos edita pervenerunt obloquia blasphemie;"—[alluding to the Emperor's circular letter of April 20, 1239, sent to the princes and nobles of Europe, as Matthew Paris tells us, "ut suam allegaret innocentiam, et Papalem manifestaret proterviam;"]—"sed nos omni Deo servitute subjecti, detractorum sagittis impetimur; cum nec ab his opprobriis immunis Dominus relinquitur." Matthew Paris, *Hist. Angl.* p. 455. And again, in the same letter (*ibid.* p. 559), "Unum quidem est, de quo, etsi pro

homine perditio sit dolendum, lætari non modicum et Deo regratiari debetis; quod volente Domino diutius occultari non patitur umbra mortis iste, qui gaudet se nominari præambulum antichristi, non expectans propinquum suæ confusioni iudicium, &c."

The reply of the Emperor Frederick II. is preserved in the collection of his letters, by his Chancellor Petrus de Vineis, (ed. Simon Schardius Basil., 1566, 8vo.) After a comparison of the royal and sacerdotal power to the disposition of the sun and moon in the constitution of nature, the Emperor proceeds: "sed sedens in cathedra perversi dogmatis, pharisæus unctus oleo nequitie præ participibus suis, nostri temporis Romanus pontifex, quod de cœlestis ordinis æmulatione descendit, evacuare nititur. Et credit forte cum superioribus convenire, quæ natura, non voluntate ducuntur: nostræ majestatis jubar, intendit ducere in eclipsim, dum veritate in fabulam commutata, plenæ mendaciis ad diversas mundi partes, papales mittuntur epistolæ, de complexione, non de ratione, accusantes nostræ fidei puritatem. Scripsit enim solo nomine papa, nos bestiam ascendentem de mari, plenam nominibus blasphemie, pardique varietatibus circumscriptam. Et nos ipsum beluam illam asserimus, de qua legitur: Exibat

combatants; and the awful words of prophecy were seized upon as the most effective weapons of political and religious controversy⁴. To the followers of the Abbot Joachim also, the *Fratricelli*, the *Beguins*, and other extravagant sects, who were engaged at that period in an angry warfare with the court of Rome, the fanatical application of the Apocalypse had peculiar charms. They pretended to predict from its visions, with the help of some new and peculiar re-

alius equus rufus de mari, et qui sedebat super eum, sumebat pacem de terra, ut viventes invicem se interficiant. Nam a suæ promotionis tempore, iste pater non misericordiarum, sed discordiarum, desolationis, et non consolationis sollicitus procurator, totum mundum ad scandala excitavit. Et ut verba sua recto sensu interpretemur, ipse draco magnus qui seduxit universum orbem, Antichristus est, cujus nos dixit esse præambulum: et alter Balaam conductus precio, ut malediceret nobis, princeps per principes tenebrarum, qui abusi sunt Prophetiis. Hic est angelus proiliens de abyssu, habens phyalas plenas amaritudine, ut mari et terræ noceat.”—Petr. de Vineis, *Epistolar. lib. i. c. 31*, p. 209, sq.

It is evident, however, and the remark is of some importance, that the Emperor applied these prophecies to the individual Pope then sitting on the chair of St. Peter, not to the Popedom, or succession of Popes during any long period. According to his theory, if we

suppose him to have seriously propounded any theory for the exposition of the Apocalypse, the *individual* Gregory IX. was the Antichrist to whom he applied the prophecies. It was taken for granted at that period, that the Antichrist of prophecy was necessarily an individual.

⁵ Thus the author of the Treatise “*De Antichristo et ministris ejus*,” attributed by some to Nicholas Oresme, by others to Bonaventure, and published by Martene and Durand (*Collect. Ampliss. tom. ix. c. 1271*), refers to the excommunication of the Emperor Frederick, as a proof of the cessation of the Roman Empire, and, therefore, one of the signs of the near approach of Antichrist. “*Imperium Romanum*,” he says, “a Julio Cæsare incipiens, fere per mille trecentum annos secundum fidem chronicorum, usque ad Frederici quondam Romani Imperatoris condemnationem, se extendit, in quo Romanum cessasse videtur imperium.” Part I. c. 3, col. 1283.

velations of their own, the total abolition of the Christian Church, its worship, its hierarchy, and its endowments; and in its stead, the substitution of a new dispensation brought about by the agency of the mendicant friars of St. Francis,—a dispensation which was to excel in spirituality, the Christian religion, as far as the Gospel of Christ had surpassed in excellence, the abrogated law of Moses. And the existing hierarchy of the Church, by whom, of course, such doctrines were vehemently discountenanced, were denounced as the Babylon of the Apocalypse, the children of Antichrist, the beast to whom it was given to make war upon the saints, and to whom the dragon gave his power and his seat, and great authority[†].

In the hands of these wild and fanatical expositors, it was not to be expected that the interpretation of the Apocalypse should assume the form of a regular commentary; but the hint they suggested was not lost upon the men of learning better qualified for such a task, who remained in the communion of the Church. The necessity of some attempt to put forth a safer exposition of the prophecy, and thus to deprive the fanatical sects of the popular and effective weapon of controversy with which they had assailed the Christian hierarchy, was soon perceived; and accordingly, in the middle of the fourteenth

[†] For some account of the doctrines of the Abbot Joachim, the Fratricelli and Beguins, and other fanatical sects here

alluded to, see Discourses on the Prophecies relating to Antichrist, Note D, p. 453 sq.

century, regular commentaries were for the first time constructed on the new assumption, that the Apocalypse contained a brief prophetic history of the Church, and of the Empire in its relations to the Church, from the days of the Apostles to the consummation of all things; and that every event of sufficient magnitude to be so distinguished, was to be found, more or less clearly figured, in the imagery of its mysterious symbols.

The historical, or as they were called, the literal commentators, who had flourished before that period, and who, as has been said, were in the habit of combining the historical with the allegorical principle of interpretation, had very generally agreed in regarding the several visions of the seals, the trumpets, the vials, as applicable in their literal sense each to the same chronological periods, viewed under different aspects, or prophetically described with different degrees of accuracy or fulness". A large majority

^u The principle is thus laid down by Victorinus (A.D. 290), "Tuba autem verbum est potestatis, et licet repetat per phialas, non quasi bis factum dicit, sed quoniam semel futurum est quod est decretum a Deo, ut fiat, ideo bis dicitur. Quicquid igitur in tubis minus dixit, hic in phialis est. Nec aspiciendus est ordo dictorum, quoniam sæpe Spiritus sanctus ubi ad novissimi temporis finem percurrerit, rursus ad eadem tempora redit, et supplet ea quæ minus dixit." *Bibl. Patrum*, tom. i. col. 578, Paris,

1654. So also the commentary of Berengaudus (circa A. D. 780), formerly attributed to St. Ambrose, interprets the seals, trumpets, and vials, of the same events under different aspects; for example, this writer says, speaking of the harmony of the trumpets, and vials, "Eandem ergo significationem habent isti [angeli, sc. phialarum] quam et illi [angeli tubarum]; significant quippe prædicatores, qui fuerunt ab initio, et erunt usque ad finem. Sed ideo bis ponuntur, quia sicut superius demonstravimus, ea

of them for example, have assumed, that the Apocalypse contains a prophetical description of seven states or conditions of the Christian Church ; as the state of foundation under Christ and his apostles ; the state of persecution under the heathen emperors ; the state of prosperity under Constantine ; the state of division under heretics ; the state of peace and tranquillity under Charlemagne ; of renewed persecution under Antichrist ; and of final retribution, in the reward of the righteous and punishment of the wicked, at the day of judgment. These seven states were supposed to be foretold in each vision ; the first of the seven seals for example, as well as the first of the seven trumpets, corresponded with the first state of the Church ; the second seal and second trumpet, with the second state of the Church ; and so of the rest. While the visions which followed the trumpets were supposed to relate chiefly to the times of Antichrist^v.

quæ sub cantu tubæ primi Angeli, secundi, tertii atque quarti gesta fuisse visa sunt, ad electos pertinent, &c.” And then he goes on to shew that the trumpets describe the events to which he endeavours to accommodate them, viewed in relation to *the elect*, while the vials predict the same events viewed in their effects upon *the reprobate*. Opp. S. Ambros. (Ed. Bened.) tom. ii. Append. col. 558.

I hope to show hereafter that the abandonment of this ancient principle of interpre-

tation has been one of the most influential causes of the failure of modern expositors. I speak of course of the general principle that the successive visions of the Apocalypse describe the same events in different aspects, and with different degrees of fullness. In the application of this principle to their several systems ancient commentators differ widely.

^v This is the account which Petrus Aureolus (a writer of the Franciscan order, who flourished about A. D. 1321) has

But the system of interpretation which began in the fourteenth century, was founded upon the prin-

given of the expositions which up to his own time were popular in the Church.

After telling us that the Apocalypse may be interpreted, "vel secundum sensum imaginarium, vel secundum sensum moralem et mysticum, vel secundum sensum literalem, et apparitionem continentem futurorum eventum;" and having given an account of the first and second of these systems of interpretation as they were adopted in his times, he thus speaks of the third or literal sense. "Secundum vero sensum literalem dici potest: quod continetur in istis sex visionibus futurorum eventus, quoad tribulationes et persecutiones quas passura est ecclesia, maxime sub tempore Antichristi. Potest etiam dividi totus processus ecclesiæ in septem ætaturas, per similitudinem qua status totius mundi dividitur in septem ætates. Habet ergo ecclesia septem status. Primum quidem suæ foundationis sub tempore apostolorum et discipulorum Christi. Secundum vero persecutionis sub tempore imperatorum et martyrum. Tertium prosperitatis et exaltationis sub tempore Constantini, qui ei largitus est honorem et abundantiam temporalium bonorum. Quartum vero divisionis et dissecationis inter se sub tempore hæreticorum. Quintum perfectæ pacificationis et dilationis sub tempore Caroli et

imperatorum successorum, ille namque dilatavit ecclesiam, multa cænobia fundando, et pacificavit ad plenum. Sextum vero novissimæ persecutionis sub tempore Antichristi, et suorum discipulorum. Septimum præmiationis bonorum et punitionis malorum post diem judicii, et post destructionem Antichristi. Secundum ergo hunc septenarium procedit quælibet visio. Nam in prima ponuntur septem sigilla, et respondet primum sigillum primo statui, secundum secundo: et sic deinceps. In tertia vero de dracone et muliere, maxime immoratur circa sextum statum de persecutione Antichristi: et communiter deinceps, immo secundum hunc modum exponendi quælibet visio maxime circa hoc immoratur. Potest autem aliter dici de istis statibus ut ille status qui dictus est tertius de tempore Constantini omittatur, nam tunc inchoata est discessio et divisio hæreticorum per Arrium. Et secundum hoc, tempus Antichristi pertinebit ad quintum statum, et sextus computabitur ab occisione Antichristi usque ad finem judicii: septimus vero a die judicii et deinceps. Sed quia juxta hunc modum exponendi tota hæc prophetia versaretur circa persecutiones quas inferet Antichristus: et per consequens omitterentur multa, et maxima quæ circa ecclesiam tempore intermedio evenerunt,

ciple that the successive visions of the seals and of the trumpets were to be considered, not as repetitions of the same events, but as a continuous prophetic history of the Church. For example; the history of the Church was supposed to be divided into six periods; of which the first extended from the birth of Christ to the times of Julian the Apostate, and was represented by the vision of the seals; because the Church was then as it were shut up and sealed, under the persecution of the heathen emperors. The second, extending to the reign of Pope Gregory the Great, was contained in the vision of the trumpets; because the Church was then for the most part under the power of heretics. The third period, from the emperor Phocas to Charlemagne, was foretold in the vision of the dragon and the beasts; which was considered by these commentators as predicting the persecutions of Cosroes, Mahomet, and the Saracens. The fourth period from

vel eventient non videtur rationabile, quod a Joanne ommissa fuerint in prophetia ista. Idcirco visum est aliis quod in hoc libro prophetice sint prædictæ omnes notabiles passiones, mutationes, persecutiones et novitates quæ circa universalem ecclesiam contingunt: et non solum persecutio Antichristi." Petri Aureoli Compendiosa in S. Script. Comment. f. 242, sq. Paris, 8vo.

It will be seen from this statement, that the literal interpretations which were current up to the time of Aureolus,

were characterized, first, by their regarding the later visions of the Apocalypse as synchronizing with, and supplementary to, the former; and secondly, by explaining predictions principally of the latter days, or the days of Antichrist. But the interpretation then apparently for the first time proposed, and approved by our author, proceeded on the principle, that all the notable events of the Christian Church are of necessity to be found foretold in the prophecy. The theory, therefore, agrees in its general principle with

Charlemagne to Henry IV., was prophetically described in the vision of the angel having the seven plagues. The fifth period, from the death of Henry IV., to the destruction of Antichrist, was supposed to be foretold in the vision of Babylon and the beast. And the sixth and last period, from the destruction of Antichrist, to the consummation of all things, was assigned to the remainder of the prophecy".

the systems of modern expositors, differing only in this, that Aureolus still retained the ancient opinion that the times of Antichrist were *the latter times*, and would be fulfilled in a short space before the second appearing of our Lord.

"I have again taken Aureolus as a fair specimen of this class of expositors: immediately after the words last quoted he adds:—

"Concordando itaque historias de præterito, in quibus notabilia quæ contigerunt ecclesiæ conscribuntur ad prophetiam istam, dici potest, quod quicquid ibi historice describitur, in hoc libro prophetice continetur. Status autem ecclesiæ secundum descriptionem historiarum dividitur in sex tempora. Ut sit primum tempus a fundatione ecclesiæ per discipulos et apostolos usque ad Julianum apostatam, in quo tempore ecclesia extitit quasi clausa et sigillata sub persecutione imperatorum paganorum. Et totum istud tempus prophetice prædicitur in prima visione de septem sigillis. Secundum vero tempus fuit mortuo Juliano et Valentino im-

peratoribus usque ad Justinianum imperatorem, vel usque ad Mauritium: cujus tempore fuit papa magnus Gregorius. Et in hoc toto tempore fuit ecclesia quasi sub angelis canentibus cum tubis, quia sub persecutione hæreticorum: toto enim illo discursu plures ex imperatoribus arriani fuerunt, et aliis hæresibus infecti. Et totum istud tempus prophetice continetur in secunda visione. Tertium vero tempus fuit a Phoca imperatore, qui successit Mauritio, usque ad Constantinum: quem excœcavit Hyrene mater sua, cujus tempore Græcorum imperium translatum est in Carolum, et in Germanos. In illo namque tempore ecclesia passa est persecutionem draconis, scilicet Cosdroæ: et bestię, scilicet Mahometi: et persecutiones saracenorum: et totum istud tempus prophetice prædicitur in tertia visione. Quartum vero tempus fuit a Carolo magno primo imperatore germano, usque ad Henricum quartum imperatorem, in quo tempore ecclesia fuit sub quibusdam plagis et phyalis iracundia Dei plenis, ratione mul-

D

I have entered into these particulars for the purpose of enabling you to understand more clearly, the precise difference in principle between the earlier systems of historical exposition, and that which became popular in the fourteenth century. You will not, of course, conclude that the same sixfold division of the history of the Church was exactly adopted by every commentator; for each took the liberty of arranging the periods so as to suit his own peculiar system; but what I desire to impress upon you is this, that by the expositors of the fourteenth century, the principle seems first to have been suggested, that the visions of the Apocalypse should be considered, not as synchronous, according to the more ancient belief of the Church, but as predicting events chronologically successive: and that the great design of the Prophecy was to foretell all the more important transactions in the history of the empire and of the Christian religion, from the age of the Apostles to the end of the world.

tiplicis schismatis et quorundam adversorum, ut postea apparebit. Et totum hoc prophetice prædicatur in quarta visione: ubi agitur de angelis qui habebant septem plagas. Quintum vero tempus fuit a tempore Henrici prædicti, et durat usque ad tempora Antichristi: et tempora judicii in quo ecclesia quandoque habuit victoriam de Babylone muliere meretrice sub regibus Hierusalem: et aliquando succubuit, et hoc tempus describitur in

quinta visione. Sextum vero tempus erit sub persecutione Antichristi usque ad diem judicii, post quem erit gloria paradisi, et consummatio mysteriorum Dei, et huic correspondet visio sexta."—*Ibid.* f. 243. *d.* et sq.

The reader will perceive that the characteristic feature of this exposition is, that it considers the several periods into which it divides the prophecy, as chronologically succeeding one another in the event.

The business of the commentator was, therefore, reduced to this; to compare the facts recorded in history with the predictions of the prophecy, and to discover their harmony and agreement. In working out the details of this comparison, both as to the events selected from the annals of the Church, and as to the particular parts of the prophecy, in which they were supposed to have been predicted, great diversities existed; but in the general principle which I have just stated, all were agreed; and popular commentators have continued to take the same view of the structure of the Apocalypse, to the present day.

At the era of the Reformation, the advantage to be obtained in controversy, by the application of certain prophecies of the Apocalypse to the Church or Court of Rome and its corruptions, was clearly seen, and seized upon without scruple. Luther, at a very early period of his labours, pronounced the Pope to be the Antichrist of prophecy^x, and in this

^x Luther appears to have adopted these extreme views in the latter part of the year 1520. For on the 6th of April, in that year he writes to the Pope, in the most respectful terms, as "beatissime Pater," and while he boldly censures the abuses of the Roman court, he speaks of the Pope himself, "sicut agnus in medio luporum sedens, sicut Daniel in medio leonum." (Opp. tom. ii. fol. 1; Witeb. 1546.) On the 17th of November, however, in the same year, at the end of his

appeal to a future council, he speaks of Leo X. as *an* Antichrist; and soon after, still, as it would seem, using the term in this indefinite way, he issued his celebrated letter, "adversus execrabilem Antichristi bullam," where he says, "Quid enim hic optandum mihi foret, quam ut nunquam absolverer, reconciliarer, communicarer Antichristo isti indoctissimo, impiissimo, furiosissimo?" And again, "Existimationem igitur suam quisque habeat de Romanis. Ego quisquis fuerit hujus

he was speedily imitated by all his followers: the historical interpretation of the Apocalypse, therefore, became highly popular with the continental Reformers, and the opinion that the Papal power and other abuses of the Church, might be identified with the predicted Antichrist, was zealously propagated, as an easy method of bringing to a single point, the great questions that were at issue with the Roman See.

In England, however, where the Reformation of religion was conducted upon higher principles, although at first the extreme views of the foreign Reformers were received with favour, yet no sooner was our Church so far settled as to al-

bullæ autor, eum pro Antichristo habeo, et contra Antichristum hæc scribo, redempturus veritatem Christi, quod in me fuerit, quam ille extinguere conatur," (Ibid. f. 83, *d.*)

At the beginning of the next year, however, in his Reply to Ambrosius Catharinus (Opp. ibid. f. 141), he expounds the prophecy of Daniel, ch. viii. and applies it in all its parts to the Pope and the Papal court, and formally identifies the Papal power with the Antichrist of prophecy. This work is dated 25th Jan., 1521, and on the 22nd of June in the same year, in his "*Rationis Latomiænæ confutatio*," he thanks God for having enabled him to make this discovery:—

"*Gratias autem ago Domino meo Jhesu Christo, qui pro*

hac tentatione me centuplo temporali hujus scientiæ honoravit, ut jam persuasissimus sim Papam esse portentum illud ultimum omnibus scripturis prædictum Antichristum. Universitates vero synagogas synagogarum Satanae, in quibus Sophistothæologi, Epicurei illi porci suum regnum regnant." (Ibid. f. 224).

Thus was the German Reformation unhappily pledged to an interpretation of prophecy in itself untenable; and which has obscured, if not altogether extinguished, in the Lutheran and Reformed communions, the true testimony of Holy Scripture, as it was received by the primitive Church, as to the coming of an individual Antichrist, and the persecution and apostacy of the latter times.

low her real tone and spirit to be felt, than the controversial applications of prophecy were seen to be inconsistent with our true position, and uncongenial with our theology⁷. They were abandoned, therefore, for the most part, to the extreme party, who had renounced all regard to Christian antiquity, and set up a platform of Church polity unknown to all former ages; who, not content with denouncing the Roman Patriarch as the Anti-

⁷ See Peter Heylin, in his answer to Burton, p. 126, sq. Lond. 1637, where, after proving that the Homilies of the Church do not formally resolve the Pope to be the great Antichrist, he adds (p. 128), "I have yet one thing more to say unto you in this point. Saint *John* hath given it for a rule, that *every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God, but is the spirit of Antichrist, whereof you have heard, &c.* So that unlesse you can make good, as I thinke you cannot, that the Pope of *Rome* confesseth not that *Jesus Christ* is come in the *flesh*, you have no reason to conclude that he is that *Antichrist*."

Dr. Christopher Dow, in his learned tract, in reply to the same Burton, entitled "Innovations unjustly charged upon the present Church and State," Lond. 1637, p. 53, says, "To the third, that the Pope is not *Antichrist*, I answer, that though many of the learned in our Church (especially at the beginning of the *Reformation*, when the greatest heat was

stricken between us and *Rome*) have affirmed the Pope to be *Antichrist*, and his whole religion *Antichristian*: and that some, exceeding the bound of moderation in this point, have passed abroad, and that with the license of authority (wherein yet they are to be excused, in that they have beene so intolerably provoked by the odious criminations of the adversary), yet to them that calmly and seriously consider it, it may not without good reason bee disputed as doubtful: whether the Pope, or any of them, in his person, or the Papall Hierarchy bee that great Antichrist, which is so much spoken of. And which way soever it be determined, it makes not the religion any whit the better, nor frees the practises of the Popes and Court of *Rome*, from being justly accounted and stiled *Antichristian*."

These passages may be taken as specimens of the teaching of our more moderate and learned Divines, at the period to which reference is here made.

christ, and the great communion over which he presides, as the Babylon of St. John, included also in the same condemnation, our own episcopacy and ecclesiastical discipline. It is true that the application of the prophecies to the Roman corruptions was maintained and put forward in our Church, with great show of learning, by the excellent Joseph Mede, in other respects a sound and consistent Churchman. Archbishop Ussher, too², and many others, especially of those who in their doctrinal opinions were disposed, as he was, to sympathize with the Genevan theology, were zealous for the same views of prophecy, although they continued in communion with the Church. But in general, such views were renounced by our Divines; and Mede himself complains that his prophetic speculations were at that time discountenanced, and that they had operated as a bar to his preferment^a :

² See Ussher's great work, "De Christianarum ecclesiarum successione et statu," which is entirely constructed on the hypothesis, that the mediæval corruptions of the Church were foretold in prophecy, and that the Apocalypse is a prophetic history of the empire and of the Church, from the first to the second advent of the Lord.

^a See his Letter to Dr. Twisse (Epist. lvi., Works, book iv. p. 818), where he says, "For your question about *Genuflexio*, or *Adoratio versus altare*, I was in some pause whether to answer to it, or pass it by

in silence. I confess I have not been unacquainted with speculations in things of this nature: they were my eldest thoughts and studies, full twenty years ago, and the argument of my *concio ad clerum*, when I commenced Bachelor of Divinity, and before I was any proficient in the Apocalypse. And it may be I have had so many notions that way as would have made another man a Dean or a Prebend or something else, ere this. But the point of the *Pope's being Antichrist*, as a dead fly, marred the savour of that ointment."

nor do his writings appear to have produced much impression upon the Church, until about a century or more after his death.

But even those of our English theologians who were disposed to abandon the polemical use of the Apocalyptic prophecies in the controversy with Rome, still retained the great principle of the historical interpretation. Arguing from those passages which speak of the period of its visions as short, and the fulfilment as at hand, they limited the entire prophecy to the primitive ages of the Church; regarding it as having been fully accomplished in the early persecutions under the heathen emperors, in the triumphs of Christianity, the overthrow of idolatry, the civil establishment of the Church under the Emperor Constantine, and the spread of Mahometanism and the Turkish power^b. But they still maintained that the visions of the Apocalypse were chronolo-

^b Hammond, one of the earliest and most systematic propounders of this interpretation, gives the following short summary of his theory: "After the Preface, in the first chapter, to ver. 10., and the visions about the *seven Churches of Asia*, each of them set down distinctly, c. 2 and 3, this book contains, first, the proceedings of God with the *Jews*, from the fourth to the twelfth chapter: secondly, the infancy and growth of the Church of *Christ*, in order to the heathen world, till it came through great oppositions to get possession of the *Roman* empire, partly by destroying,

partly by converting the heathen and villanous, impure Idol-worshippers from the twelfth to the twentieth chapter: thirdly, the peaceable, flourishing state of the Church for a thousand years (and after that the breaking out of the *Turk*, and harassing the Eastern Churches, briefly touched, together with their destruction, and the end of the world), most rhetorically described from chapter 20, to the 6th verse of chapter 22, and from thence to the end of the Book, a formal conclusion of the whole matter." Paraphrase and Annotations, p. 860. Lond. 1689, fol. See also Bishop

gically successive, containing, in the order of the events foretold, a brief prophetic summary of that period of the history of the Church.

After the lapse of another century, however, when the Revolution had produced in England a fresh source of bitterness towards Rome, the controversial exposition of the Apocalypse was revived and widely propagated by the labours of Cressener, Daubuz, Lowman, Sir Isaac Newton, Bishops Lloyd, Newton, Hurd, Warburton, and a host of others. And from that period to the present day, the opinion that the corruptions of the Roman Church were foretold in the Apocalypse, became the popular and received doctrine of the great majority of our Divines. Still the other interpretation, which supposes the Apocalypse to have been fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem, the early persecutions and heresies, and the spread of Mahometanism, has always had numerous advocates in our Church; it has been adopted also by some Divines of great learning among foreign Protestants; and in the Gallican branch of the Church, it has had many patrons, of whom it may be enough to mention here, the eminent names of Bossuet and Calmet.

Mountague's *Appello Cæsarem*, p. 140. sq. Lond. 1625, where he maintains that the proposition that the Pope is *Magnus ille Antichristus*, has been "neither determined by the *publick* doctrine of the Church, nor proved by any good argument of *private*

men," and that "the marks of the *great Antichrist* fit the *Turkish* tyrannie every way, as well as the *Papacie*."—See also Dr. John Hildrop's "Treatise of the three Evils of the last Times."—Published anonymously, 8vo. Lond. 1711.

From this rapid sketch of the history of the interpretation of the book of Revelation, it follows, that the historical expositions now current in the Church, are divisible into two principal classes. The first comprehends those commentators who look upon the Apocalypse as a prophecy of certain remarkable events in the history of mankind, from the age of the Apostles, to the end of time. Of these, some consider the events foretold to be such only as relate to the *spiritual* interests of the Christian religion^c: others are willing to include also those political or secular transactions which directly, or in any remarkable way, affect the welfare and interests of the Church^d. According to these expositors, therefore, the Apocalypse is a prophecy, of which part has been already fulfilled, part is now actually in the course of fulfilment, and part is yet to come.

The second class of commentators consists of those who consider the whole Prophecy as long ago fulfilled; either exclusively in the destruction of Jerusalem^e; or in that event, together with the Pagan persecutions, the early heresies, and the ultimate triumph of Christianity, when it was adopted as the religion of the Roman Empire^f; to which some add the progress of the Mahometan imposture, and the

^c As Vitringa, Woodhouse, &c.

^d Mede, Daubuz, Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, Lowman, Whiston, Faber, Hales,

Frere, Cunningham, Croly, Habershon, Keith, &c.

^e Wetstein, Harenberg.

^f Grotius, Hammond, Eichhorn, Lee, Ewald, &c.

taking of Rome by Alaric^c. Of this latter class of commentators, however, it is fair to say, that there are some, who, while they regard the Revelation as having already received a primary fulfilment in the events alluded to, are willing to admit also, that a second, and in some respects, a more complete accomplishment of its predictions is yet to come^d.

Upon the whole, then, from the great discrepancies that exist in the interpretation of this sacred Book, and from the fact, that it is still possible to debate in the Christian Church, whether the Apocalyptic prophecies have already been fulfilled or not, I would argue, that these very doubts and differences constitute an evidence, not indeed, perhaps, absolutely conclusive in itself, but, prior to any circumstantial proof, forming a strong presumption, against the hypothesis of their fulfilment. Strange would it be, indeed, and if we may so presume to say, incredible, that a prophecy foretelling such fearful and awful judgments; events so vitally affecting the interests of the Church and the welfare of every individual Christian; events in which all

^c Bossuet, Calmet, De Sacy, &c.

^d So Bossuet (Preface sur l'Apocalypse, p. 109, Œuvres, tom. iii. Versailles, 1815), "Qui ne sait que la fécondité infinie de l'Écriture n'est pas toujours épuisée par un seul sens? Ignore t'on que Jésus-Christ et son Eglise sont prophétisés dans des endroits, où il est clair que Salomon, qu'Ezéchias, que Cyrus, que Zorobabel, que

tant d'autres sont entendus à la lettre? C'est un vérité qui n'est contestée, ni par les catholiques, ni par les protestans. Qui ne voit donc qu'il est très possible de trouver un sens très-suivi et très-littéral de l'Apocalypse parfaitement accompli dans le sac de Rome sous Alaric, sans préjudice de tout autre sens, qu'on trouvera devoir s'accomplir à la fin des siècles?"

who name the name of Christ, are manifestly so deeply and personally concerned,—strange I say, must it seem, to every reflecting mind, if events like these have really occurred, and yet the Church, after so many centuries, be ignorant or uncertain of the fulfilment of the prophecies that foretold them.

If, therefore, there be any force in this presumptive argument, and if it should appear that confirmation can be found for it in an examination of the Apocalypse itself, it will follow, that the great error of expositors, the great cause of their discrepancies, has been the assumption, that the Apocalypse is in course of fulfilment, or already for the most part fulfilled; an assumption, from which it has necessarily been inferred, that the chief business of the commentator must be, not so much to study the text, and follow with docility its guidance, as to accommodate it to history; to ransack the existing records of the empire or of the Church, for the purpose of discovering what events will admit of being applied, with most plausibility or apparent reason, to the symbols or imagery of the text.

Let me add in conclusion, that the passage which I have chosen for my text, in which a blessing is promised to all who read or hear this prophecy, has long appeared to me, to be utterly inconsistent with the popular historical or polemical interpretations. If such interpretations, or even the principles upon which they proceed, be true, the Apocalypse can

be read and understood by the scholar and the man of learning only: by him who has penetrated into the secrets of history, and traced the rise and progress and downfall of dynasties and doctrines; but to the poor, the unlettered, to those who read the words of the prophecy alone, to those, who, from their inability perhaps to read, are forced to content themselves with hearing it read by others; to such it is impossible, on the principles of the historical commentators, that the Apocalypse can be any thing but an enigma and a riddle. How can they keep those things that are written in this prophecy, to whom the things written are unintelligible, and *necessarily* unintelligible? How can they look for the time as at hand, if the time of the prophecy be spread already over nineteen centuries? Surely then such a promise as that which is contained in the text, must be understood, as implying, if not as asserting, that in the words of the prophecy itself, carefully considered and diligently "kept," we have all that can be necessary to the right understanding of it; and the reason that is given for our keeping them in our hearts, namely, "because the time is at hand," would seem to intimate, that the period within which the prophecy shall be accomplished, shall be, not a long and tedious series of many centuries, but a brief and rapid space; for the approach of which, we are to watch, as men that know neither the day nor the hour of their Master's coming; "looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great

God and our Saviour, Jesus Christⁱ ;” and ever bearing in mind the prophetic warning of our Lord and Saviour, “for as the lightning cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be^k.”

ⁱ Tit. ii. 13.

^k Matt. xxiv. 27.

LECTURE II.

“Et in hoc quidem libro, cujus nomen est Apocalypsis, obscure multa dicuntur, ut mentem legentis exerceant, et pauca in eo sunt, ex quorum manifestatione indagentur cætera cum labore; maxime quia sic eadem multis modis repetit, ut alia atque alia dicere videatur; cum aliter atque aliter hæc ipsa dicere vestigetur.”—August. De Civit. Dei, l. xx. c. 17.

LECTURE II.

REV. xxii. 6, 7.

“ And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.”

IN my former Discourse, I endeavoured to give some account of the changes that took place at different periods, in the principles upon which the Apocalypse was interpreted, and its visions understood, or popularly explained, in the Christian Church.

These changes terminated about the middle of the fourteenth century, in the establishment of certain views of the design and structure of the prophecy, which have ever since continued to hold their ground, and have been adopted in substance, by a large majority of subsequent commentators, as the basis of their expositions.

The earlier expositors had almost unanimously regarded the Apocalypse as predicting more especially, the persecutions of the Church under Antichrist, and the concomitant events to be accomplished at the end of the world. But at the period

to which I have alluded, the Apocalypse was, for the first time, represented as a chronological prophecy; a prediction, that is, of the more remarkable events in the fates and fortunes of the Christian Church, from the days of the apostles, to the end of time^a.

^a See this principle stated by one of the earliest of this class of commentators, in a passage already quoted, p. 31, from Petrus Aureolus. It is thus, also, distinctly expressed, by a modern writer whose system of exposition has pushed the historical theory to its utmost length. "The prophecies contained in the Revelation of St. John are spread, in point of chronology, over the entire great calendar of seven times;" [which "seven times" he supposes to begin at some point between the years B. C. 658, and 646, and to terminate at some point between A. D. 1863, and 1875], "extending also, beyond the allotted period of that calendar, to the final consummation of all things."—Faber, *Sacred Calendar of Prophecy*, vol. ii. p. 284, Lond. 1828; *Comp. Book i.*, ch. 3 (vol. i. p. 61, sq.) The Apocalypse in this way of considering it, as it is impossible, in so short a prophecy, that *every* event should be portrayed, must, of necessity, be regarded as predicting only the more remarkable events. And here occurs the great difficulty, as well as the great source of discrepancy, in this class of expositions. What is the criterion by which we are to decide that

one event is remarkable, and must have been foretold; and that another is unimportant, and may have been passed over? Some take Popery, others Protestantism, as the great key to this dilemma. Some take Pagan, others Christian Rome, as the great centre and scope of the prophecy. Bishop Bossuet, for example, reasons thus; "Je ne puis donc consentir au raisonnement de ceux qui en renvoient l'accomplissement à la fin des siècles, car les combats de l'Eglise, et ce qui alloit arriver tant aux Juifs qu'aux Gentils, en punition du mépris de l'Evangile, la chute des idoles, et la conversion du monde, et enfin la destinée de Rome et de son empire, étoient de trop grands, et tout ensemble de trop prochains objets pour être cachés au prophète de la nouvelle alliance."—*Pref. sur l'Apoc. n. 5.* (*Euvres*, t. iii. p. 89). But can we, without presumption, reason so of prophecy? Does not the very idea of determining *a priori*, what is and what is not great enough to be foretold, indicate of itself, some fundamental error in the system that requires it? And again, the same writer thus states briefly his view of the Apocalypse, in which it will be seen that he

It followed as a necessary consequence from this view of the design of the prophecy, that the visions of the Seals, the Trumpets, the Vials, were to be interpreted as predicting events chronologically successive; the Trumpets, for example, foretelling what was to take place after the accomplishment of the Seals, and the Vials relating to events which were to follow after the fulfilment of the Trumpets; so that the principle very generally adopted by the more ancient commentators, that these successive visions were, in their fulfilment, synchronous, exhibiting to us the same events, in different aspects, or under different degrees of development, was then likewise given up and abandoned.

I am persuaded, however, that the ancient interpretation, thus gradually broken down, contained, in its main outline, the true views of the structure and design of the prophecy.

I would, therefore, propose to your consideration, for the recovery of the primitive interpretation, the two following propositions.

First, that the main design of the prophecy is, to prepare the Church for the great and glorious coming of our Saviour; and that its fulfilment will occupy, not the long course of centuries which have elapsed since the first preaching of Christianity, but

agrees with Faber, and the Protestant controversial expositors, in the general principle of interpretation, however widely he differs from them in the application of that principle: "Jésus Christ appelle saint Jean pour lui découvrir les secrets

de l'avenir, et ce qui devoit arriver à son Eglise, depuis le temps où il lui parloit, jusqu'à la fin des siècles, et à l'entier accomplissement de tout le dessein de Dieu." — *Abregé de l'Apocalypse*, n. 2. (*Euvres*, t. iii. p. 509).

a short space of time comprehending the still future period of our Lord's second advent.

Secondly, that the successive visions of the Apocalypse are not to be taken as predicting events which were regularly to follow each other in order of time, but as repetitions of the same great prophecy; the later visions being supplemental to the former, depicting the same events, in new points of view, with new circumstances, or additional particulars.

I hope now to adduce some evidence from the Apocalypse itself, to convince you of the truth of these two principles.

I. The former of them consists in fact of two propositions; first, that the main subject of the prophecy is the second advent of our Lord: and secondly, that the events foretold, which are to precede the second coming of the Lord, when they begin to be accomplished, will take place within a short space of time.

1. That the main subject of the Apocalypse is the second advent of our Lord, will appear, I trust, with convincing evidence, when we come to examine in detail, the separate visions of the prophecy, and to compare them with each other. At present, I shall only refer you to the express declarations to this effect, with which the Apostle opens and concludes the book, announcing, in both places, the second coming of the Lord, as the great subject matter of the prophecy^b.

^b That the main subject of the prophecy is the second advent of the Lord, might seem at first sight to be implied in

The first of these passages occurs immediately after the prefatory sentences, in which the Apostle, having declared his inspiration, and asserted the

its very name, *Apocalypse*; a word peculiar to the Scriptures (St. Jerome, Comm. in Gal. i. 12), and which is used by our Lord himself, by St. Peter, and by St. Paul, to denote the second advent of the Son of man. Thus in the Gospel (St. Luke, xvii. 30), our Lord, when it was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come (after referring to the days of Noah and to the days of Lot, to illustrate his assertion that "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation)," adds; "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed;"—*ἡ ἡμέρα ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀποκαλύπτται*. St. Paul, also speaks of the second coming of Christ, as "the Apocalypse of the Lord Jesus," *ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ*,—the period, that is, as our version renders the words, "when He shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel."—(2 Thess. i. 7). In another place, the same Apostle, writing to the Corinthians, describes them as "coming behind in no gift, waiting for the revelation,—the Apocalypse (*τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν*),—of our Lord Jesus Christ."—(1 Cor. ii. 7). And St. Peter exhorts Christians to "be sober and hope to the

end, for the grace that is to be brought unto them at the revelation (*ἐν ἀποκαλύψει*), of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. i. 13).

Thus "The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ," the title of this prophecy, is a phrase that seems consecrated in the passages just quoted, to denote the second advent of our Lord. Standing alone, it might therefore be received as indicating that the events immediately preceding and accompanying His coming were the great subject matter of the book; and taken in connexion with the many passages in which this is expressly declared to be the design of the prophecy, it may well be believed to have this meaning.

This argument was employed in this place when this Lecture was delivered from the pulpit. But on consideration the author has omitted it, because it cannot be denied that the word *ἀποκάλυψις* in other passages of the Scripture, and particularly as it stands in the title of this book, must be understood in its more general sense, as signifying a revelation of things before unknown, a manifestation of things to come; and that the prophecy is therefore called "the Revelation of Jesus Christ," because "God gave it to Him, to show unto His servants the things which must shortly come to pass." Rev. i. 1.

authority of his prophecy, addresses himself to the seven Churches of Asia, and begins his message in the following words; "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen^c."

In the concluding visions also, in the last chapter of the book, the coming of the Lord is three times announced to the Apostle. First, by the Angel, who was sent to show him the heavenly Jerusalem, in the words which I have chosen as the text of this discourse: "And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true; and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants, the things which must shortly be done. Behold I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book^d."

And again, after the angel had refused the Apostle's worship, "Behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give unto every man according as his work shall be."^e

Lastly, after the awful malediction pronounced against him who shall add unto, or take away from, the words of this prophecy: "He which testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly: Amen. Even so: Come, Lord Jesus^f."

From these remarkable passages, even if we had no other evidence, it would appear, that the coming

^c Rev. i. 7.

^d Rev. xxii. 6, 7.

^e Rev. xxii. 12.

^f Rev. xxii. 20.

of the Lord in His glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, is the great subject of the book of Revelation ; that to prepare the Church for His coming, to warn the elect against the dangers that will then surround them, is the great end for which the prophecy was written. “ I, JESUS, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches^g. ”

I would adduce also another passage of the Apocalypse in support of the same views,—a passage which appears to me to form the key to the right interpretation of the whole book, and which, when understood in what I believe to be its true signification, amounts to a distinct declaration, that the scene of the prophecy is laid in the great Day of Christ.

I allude to the words with which the Apostle begins the description of his first prophetic vision : “ I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day,”—*ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ^h*.

As these words are commonly understood, they are no more than a statement, that the visions vouchsafed to the Apostle, or at least this first vision of the seven golden candlesticks, were exhibited to him on the Lord’s dayⁱ ; that is to say, on the first

^g Rev. xxii. 16.

^h Rev. i. 10.

ⁱ Thus Bossuet renders the passage, “ Un jour de dimanche,” and adds, “ Saint Jean remarque soigneusement qu’il a reçu la révélation étant dans la souffrance, et en un jour de dimanche, au jour consacré à

Dieu et à la dévotion publique.”

Expl. de l’Apoc. *in loc.* And the Rev. Thomas Scott, in his Commentary on the verse, says, “ This was *on the Lord’s day*, which can be meant of no other than the day on which the Lord Jesus arose from the dead, even the first day of the week : and

day of the week, the weekly festival observed by the Church in memory of the Lord’s resurrection; and the passage is commonly appealed to by divines, as a remarkable proof of the apostolic origin and early use of that sacred festival.

There cannot be a question that the first day of the week was observed as a religious festival by the Apostles and their contemporaries: for the fact is established by many passages of the New Testament, as well as by the ecclesiastical history of that age. But very reasonable doubts have been expressed whether at that early period the Christian weekly festival was known by the name which the common interpretation of the passage before us supposes to have been here given to it by St. John. In no other passage of the New Testament is it spoken of as “the Lord’s day;” it is repeatedly called “the first day of the week,” *μὴ τῶν σαββάτων*,—but “the Lord’s day,” or “the day of the Lord,” is the term everywhere applied to the great Day of our Saviour’s second coming¹.

It is true that the phrase used in these passages is, *ἡμέρα Κυριοῦ*, or *ἡμέρα τοῦ Κυριοῦ*; and that the

it is a conclusive proof, that the first day was set apart, and kept holy by the primitive Christians, in commemoration of that great event: for on what other account could it have been thus mentioned?” Bishop Newton says (Dissert. xxiv). “Moreover, it is to be observed, that this revelation was given *on the Lord’s day*, when the Apostle’s

heart and affections, as we may reasonably suppose, were sublimed by the meditations and devotions of the day, and rendered more recipient of Divine inspiration.” See also, Daubuz in loc.

¹ See 1 Cor. i. 8, v. 5; 2 Cor. i. 14; Phil. i. 6, 10, ii. 16; 1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Thess. ii. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 10.

passage of the Apocalypse now before us, where the words are ἡ κυριακὴ ἡμέρα, is the only place in which the adjective is employed. But there seems no reason to suppose, in the absence of any proof, that this difference in the form of expression indicates so complete a difference of meaning, as that we should be compelled to interpret the phrase of the weekly festival, and not of that great Day of our Saviour's second coming, which the equivalent words undoubtedly signify in every other passage where they are found in the writings of the Apostles^k.

It may be observed also, that this view of the passage enables us to explain (what on the common interpretation is very insufficiently explained) the use of the emphatic article,—ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ, "*the* Day of the Lord."—If we suppose St. John to speak only of the first day of the week, no reason can be given for this use of the article, unless we should conceive him to have intended some particular Sunday, or Lord's day, that was known to his readers. Hence some have supposed that the Apostle meant the festival of Easter; an opinion for which there is no authority^l. If, however, it be admitted, that the day of the Lord here spoken of, is the great Day of our Saviour's second coming, the use of the em-

^k Wetstein seems to have understood κυριακὴ ἡμέρα in Rev. i. 10, of the Day of Judgment: his note on the words is as follows: "Hunc diem judicii vidit in spiritu, i. e. prævidit

repræsentatum, Matt. xxiii. 30; Esai. lviii. 1."

^l See Hammond (Comm. in loc. and note on ch. xviii. 2.) Eichhorn, and Rosenmüller, in loc. Ewald, Comm. in loc.

phatic article presents no difficulty, but is natural and proper^m.

Again, it is also assumed in the common interpretation of this passage, that the words, "I was in the spirit" are an assertion of the Apostle's inspiration; describing a state of supernatural illumination or ecstasy, into which he was cast by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and in which the visions he beheld were presented to his mind.

But the phrase *ἐν πνεύματι*, when used as it is here, without the article, does not necessarily signify the Holy Spirit of God; and in two other passages of the Apocalypse where it occurs, it cannot possibly have that signification. The first of these is the remarkable place where the Apostle tells us that the angel "carried him away *in the spirit*, *ἐν πνεύματι*, into the wilderness," to show him the woman sitting on the seven headed beastⁿ: the other is that in which the angel is described as having carried the Apostle away "*in spirit*, *ἐν πνεύματι*, to a great and high mountain," to show him the new Jerusalem^o.

Now in these passages, the meaning obviously is, that the Apostle was carried into the wilderness, and

^m In all the other passages above referred to (note i, p. 56) in which the phrase *day of the Lord* or *day of Christ* occurs (except those in the Epistle to the Philippians), the article is employed. But in 2 Thess. v. 2, it is omitted by some MSS. In 1 Cor. i. 8, v. 5; and 2 Cor. i. 14, the phrase occurs in connexion with the

preposition, *ἐν*, and with the article, *ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ*. In the Epistle to the Philippians it occurs once with *ἄχρις*, and twice with *εἰς*, which may explain the omission of the article. In the remaining passages it is in the nominative case, *ἡ ἡμέρα του Κυρίου*.

ⁿ Rev. xvii. 3.

^o Rev. xxi. 10.

afterwards to the great and high mountain, not really or bodily, but *in spirit*: that he seemed to himself to be carried thither, where the visions he beheld were represented as present to his soul; in like manner as St. Paul, when he described himself as having been caught up to the third heaven, says, “whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth^p.”

There seems no valid reason, therefore, why the same phrase in the passage under consideration, should not have the same signification which it is admitted to bear in every other passage of the Apocalypse where it occurs; and if so, then we must understand the Apostle, when he says, “I was in the spirit on the Lord’s day,” as asserting that he was carried forward in spirit, to the Day of Christ’s second coming; to that great and terrible Day which was foretold under the name of the Day of the Lord, and the Day of Christ, in so many passages of the prophets; the Day for which the Christian Church was taught to look and long, and whose coming was continually in the thoughts and prayers of all Christ’s faithful followers; and, therefore, that the great subject of the Apocalypse, as well as the period to which we are to look for the fulfilment of its predictions, is the coming of the Lord in glory and majesty, the Day in which He will appear, according to His promise, the second time, without sin, unto salvation^q.

^p 2 Cor. xii. 2.

^q For the view that has been here taken of Rev. i. 10, as well as for the arguments by which

it is supported, the author is indebted to the Rev. S. R. Maitland. See Note B at the end of the volume.

2. Let us now proceed to examine the evidence for the second proposition contained in our first general principle, namely, that the events foretold in the Apocalypse, up to the period of our Saviour's second coming, will be accomplished in a short and rapid space of time.

That this must have been the view which was taken of the Apocalypse in the apostolic age, will be evident from the fact, that there was, at the time, a strong persuasion in the Church, of the coming of the Lord, and the great Day of the consummation of all things, being even then at hand. This fact is so well known and so generally admitted, that I shall not stop now to quote passages from the Scriptures, or from the other writings of that age in proof of the assertion. But the argument I would build upon it is this; the primitive Christians expected the Day of Christ, and the accomplishment of the prophecies which foretold His coming, within the period of their own generation. Whether they were right or wrong in this expectation is not now the question: the fact of their looking for the immediate completion of the promises, is sufficient to prove, that they could not have regarded the Apocalypse as a prophecy whose accomplishment must necessarily occupy a series of many centuries: that they saw in it nothing inconsistent with the opinion of the Lord being at hand, and all being fulfilled within the life-time of a single generation. Whether they were right or wrong, therefore, it is beyond a doubt that they must have interpreted the Apocalypse in

harmony with the expectation of the near approach of the last great Day; and consequently it follows, that in the judgment of the age nearest to the apostles, nay, of the contemporaries of the apostles themselves, there was no long series of years and centuries—no period of twelve hundred and sixty, or two thousand three hundred years supposed to be foretold in prophecy, but all was regarded as capable of being fulfilled in the life-time of those then living.

But further; it has been expressly revealed by the inspired apostles themselves, that “the coming of the Lord draweth nigh^r.” It is not, therefore, a mere unfounded opinion of the primitive ages of Christianity, but an article of faith, revealed to us by the Holy Ghost, “that the Lord is at hand^r,” an article of faith which it is the duty of the Church in all ages to receive and believe, in obedience to our Saviour’s reiterated command, “Watch ye, therefore, for ye know neither the day, nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh^r.” Notwithstanding, therefore, the difficulties, real or apparent, with which the lapse of time since the apostles’ days may seem to have surrounded this opinion^u; notwithstanding the mysterious cause which has hitherto retarded, and still, perhaps, retards the Day of His coming^v, the Christian Church has, in point of fact, always believed, yea, and “knows perfectly, that the day of

^r S. Jam. v. 7, 8; 1 S. Pet. ii. 1–13.

7; Heb. x. 37.

^s Phil. iv. 5.

^t S. Matt. xxiv. 42–51, xxv.

^u Comp. 2 S. Pet. iii. 1–4.

^v 2 Thess. ii. 6, 7.

the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night^v;" but of the time and season of His coming no sign is given to her, except the revelation of the Wicked one, accompanied by those fearful judgments of which it is written, "and when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh^w."

If this be so then,—if it be the duty of the Church to believe, that for aught we know, the Lord may thus suddenly come, and if it has been the duty of the Church in all ages from the apostles' times so to believe, we are surely bound to interpret the Apocalypse in consistency with this faith. In other words, we must conclude that no fixed period of twelve or twenty centuries was foretold in prophecy, as necessarily to intervene between the first and second advent of the Lord;—all that is certainly revealed being, that Antichrist must first come. Had such a period been foretold, ignorance alone of the true meaning of those prophecies which were in their hands, could have led the primitive Christians to look for their Lord "as a thief in the night:" they would otherwise have known, that His coming was to be delayed for at least twelve hundred and sixty years; and the effect of that salutary ignorance of times and seasons, in which it was manifestly the intention of our Lord to leave His Church, would have been in a great degree destroyed*. It follows, therefore, that as the apos-

^v 1 Thess. v. 2.

^w S. Luke, xxi. 28.

* A similar argument has been forcibly put (although in

tolie age did believe, and as it would seem to be the duty of the Church in all ages to believe, that "the Lord is at hand," the Apocalypse must be so interpreted, that the events foretold as the precursors of His second coming may come to pass, and be accomplished in a short space of time.

Let us now inquire whether these views do not receive some sanction from direct statements of the Apocalypse itself, in which the events foretold are spoken of as shortly to be fulfilled.

It is well known, that the passages to which I allude, have occasioned great embarrassment and difficulty to all commentators, ancient and modern. By taking them in their literal signification, and fixing the commencement of the time to which they refer in the apostolic age, some have inferred that the whole prophecy was fulfilled in the primitive times of the Church, and great ingenuity and learning, have been expended in the attempt to accommodate the events of that period to the Apocalyptic prophecies'. On the other hand, those who believe

a different connexion) by P. Lambert ; "Il veut que notre foi, attentive et vigilante, soit toujours en haleine par la certitude des événemens, et par l'incertitude du moment de leur exécution : 'Tenez vous donc aussi vous autres toujours prêts parce que le Fils de l'homme viendra a l'heure que vous ne pensez pas.' Mais si l'époque en étoit clairement connue, ceux qui en seroient encore séparés par un long intervalle, pour-

roient-ils prendre pour eux le commandement que nous fait Jésus-Christ d'une continuelle vigilance? Ils seroient fort tentés de ne s'en point occuper; ils y prendroient peu d'intérêt; ils renverroient aux générations futures, destinées a en être les témoins, le soin d'y penser pour en recueillir le fruit." Expos. des prédictions et des promesses faites à l'Eglise. Tom. ii. p. 65.

^y Grotius (annot. in loc.) interprets the words *à dei γινώσκει*

that the prophecy has been in course of fulfilment from the era of its author, to the present day, have had recourse to more than one expedient to reconcile with such an hypothesis, the passages in question. Some, for example, tell us, that these passages are no more than figurative assertions of the certainty of fulfilment²; others restrict their application to the *beginning* of the fulfilment, as if the Apostle had said, not that the events will speedily be accomplished, but that they will speedily begin to be accomplished^a; while others, referring to a passage quoted by St. Peter, from the ninetyeth Psalm, assert,

ἐν τράχῃ (Rev. i. 1), “intra annos quingentos;” and Hammond (Prenotion concerning the interpretation of the Apocalypse) says:—“Having gone through all the other parts of the New Testament, I came to this last of the *Apocalypse*, as to a rock that many had miscarried and split upon, with a full resolution not to venture on the expounding of one word in it, but only to perform one office to it, common to the rest, the review of the translation. But it pleased God otherwise to dispose of it; for before I had read (with that design of translating only) to the end of the first verse of the book, these words, *ἀδὲ γινώσκει ἐν τράχῃ*, which must come to pass presently, had such an impression on my mind, offering themselves as a key to the whole prophecy, . . . that I could not resist the force of them, but attempted presently a general survey of the whole

book, to see whether those words might not probably be extended to all the prophecies of it, and have a literal truth in them, viz. that the things foretold and represented in the ensuing visions were *presently, speedily to come to pass*, one after another, after the writing of them.”

² See Jo. Godofr. Eichhorn, Comm. in Apoc. i. 1. “Enim vero *ἀδὲ γινώσκει*, Deo evenient auctore et moderatore . . . adeoque eventu comprobabuntur *certissimo*, ἐν τράχῃ h. e. τὰ χύ c. 22, 6. Vates nimirum magnas rerum conversiones *maturas* declarare solent, ut earum *certitudinem* expriment, Jes. 26, 20, c. 54, 8, Mal. 3, 1, 2, Hagg. 2, 6. Sic Jes. 10, 22, 23, *בלין הריץ interitus festinans est certissimus*.”

^a So Bossuet (in loc.) “Nous verrons en effet que ce saint apôtre prédit la suite des évènements qui alloient commencer à paroître incontinent après lui.”

that the shortness of the time should be estimated, not from our merely relative and inadequate notions of what is long or short, but from the measure formed of it by Him in whose eyes one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day^b.

But without stopping to point out the inadequacy of such interpretations, it may be enough to suggest for your consideration whether the real meaning of these passages may not be, that the events which are to precede and accompany the second advent of the Lord, shall take place in a short and rapid space of time. The Revelation of Jesus Christ is said to have been "given unto Him," by His Father, "to show unto His servants the things which must *shortly* come to pass," ἃ δὲ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει, which must come to pass in a brief space^c; and the same words occur also at the conclusion of the prophecy, "these sayings are faithful and true, and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His Angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be

^b Thus Wolf (Cur. Philol. et Crit. in Apoc. i. 1), says "Mihi quidem illorum rationes se probant, qui τὸ ἐν τάχει referunt ad γένεσθαι, et *celeriter* illud secundum Divinam computandi rationem, a Petro, 2 Epist. iii. 8, indicatam, explicandam arbitrantur."

But it deserves to be considered whether this be not a misapplication of the words of St. Peter, and of the Psalm: which are obviously intended to con-

vey to us some faint conception of the eternity of God, and can hardly be taken to furnish a rule for the interpretation of all words expressing length or shortness of time in the Scripture. Had the object been to prove that a prediction of a long period of time might really be fulfilled in a short period, the same passage might equally be resorted to.

^c Rev. i. 1.

done," ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει, which must be done in a short space^d.

In these words there is nothing to indicate the point from which the time which is spoken of as short is to take its beginning ; and if the interpretation that has been given to another passage of the Apocalypse be received, it may well deserve to be considered whether the commencement of this short period should not be referred to that Day of the Lord into which the Apostle in spirit was transported.

This opinion seems to derive some additional probability from the fact, that in other places of the Apocalypse the time—(the time, that is, in which the prophecy shall be fulfilled)—is declared to be near, or at hand : for example, at the beginning of the book, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein, *for the time is at hand*," ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς. And again, in the last chapter, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, *for the time*, (that is, evidently, the time of the accomplishment,) *is at hand*,"—ὅτι ὁ καιρὸς ἐγγύς ἐστιν.

And to the same purpose may be quoted the passages already referred to, in which the second advent of our Lord is spoken of as an event to be accomplished quickly, or in a short space of time ; "Behold I come quickly, ἔρχομαι ταχύ, blessed is he

^d Rev. xxii. 6.

^e Rev. i. 3.

^f Rev. xxii. 10.

that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." "Behold I come quickly—*ἔρχομαι ταχύ*,—and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." "He which testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly—*ναὶ ἔρχομαι ταχύ*. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus^s."

Although we are left in uncertainty, therefore, as to the period at which the wonders foretold in this prophecy shall begin to be accomplished, yet it would seem to follow, from the foregoing passages, that the events which are to usher in, and accompany the second coming of the Lord, shall all be accomplished in a brief and rapid space of time; for although it is not given to the Church to know the day nor the hour of her Master's coming, yet is she nevertheless assured, that "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night," and that "as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be^h."

^s Rev. xxii. 7, 12, 20. Comp. xi. 14, *ἡ οὐαὶ ἡ τρίτη ἔρχεται ταχύ*.

^h Matt. xxiv. 26–51. This seems for substance the interpretation suggested by Dr. Daubuz, although he endeavours to reconcile it with a long period in the things foretold, which his theory necessarily required. In his note on Rev. i. 1, he says, "In short all the expressions concerning future things happening shortly, are but to keep us awake and attentive to the coming of Christ, lest we be found unprepared. *Namque*

*dum monet nos irremissa fide intentos semper manere, securitatem cognitionis ademit, ut pendulæ expectationis incerto mens sollicita festinans, et adventus diem semper expectans, semper expectando speret, curamque pervigilem incertum ipsum, non ambigendi tamen temporis detineret, saith Hilary. And further, that which may seem to confirm all this, is, that the Hebrew Root מרר, the notion of which consists in denoting speed or haste, whose derivations are, therefore, translated by *τάχος, ταχύς*,*

Upon the whole, if the views I have been endeavouring to establish be correct, we are to regard the Apocalypse as a prophecy, the scene of which, if we may so speak, is laid in the great and terrible Day of the Lord ; a prophecy whose main and principal subject is the coming of Messiah in glory and majesty, to fulfil all that is written of Him ; and we are therefore to look for the fulfilment of its predictions, not in the early persecutions and heresies of the Church, nor in the long series of centuries from the first preaching of the Gospel to the end of time, but in the events which are immediately to precede, to accompany, and to follow the second advent of our Lord and Saviour.

II. We may now proceed to the proof of the second proposition which I have proposed for your consideration, namely that the visions of the Apocalypse are not to be considered as predicting events to follow each other, in chronological order, for a long series of many centuries ; but are rather to be regarded as repetitions of the same great prophecy, under different points of view, or with additional particulars ; all descriptive of the same event, the coming of the Lord in glory, to take vengeance on His enemies, and to give deliverance to His saints.

To convince you of this it will be necessary to un-

ταχύως, ἐν τάχει, ταχύνω, and *ταχυνός*, have not only that signification, but some of them that of rashness, folly, error, unwariness, and want of attention, even as *hasty* hath it in our language ; so that what is said to

be done in *haste*, or suddenly, is done when men are not aware, and consider not with due attention, although the things in themselves take up a great deal of time to perform them." Comm. on the Revel. p. 68.

dertake a brief but careful examination of the visions themselves, with a view to discover and note such marks of synchronism as may be found to exist in them. From such an examination it will, I think, appear, that each of the visions terminates in the great Day of Judgment, or in the complete establishment of the Kingdom of Christ: and that in some of them, events are alluded to, or spoken of as in being at the period to which the prophecy refers, and yet these events are fully described in subsequent visions only. If this shall be found to be the case, it must follow that the Apocalyptic visions are not predictions of successive periods in the history of the Church, but of one and the same period; and that the later visions are supplemental to, and illustrative of, the former¹.

1. In the first vision, in which the Lamb is seen to open the book sealed with seven seals, a series of judgments is foretold as about to come upon the inhabitants of the earth. The opening of the first four seals predicts war, famine, pestilence, and death in all its horrors, from the sword, from hunger, and from the beasts of the earth. This is followed on the opening of the fifth seal, by the martyrdom of those who shall be slain "for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held," whose souls the apostle beheld under the altar which was before the throne of God, and who were heard to cry for vengeance upon the persecutors of the Church.

¹ This was the ancient opinion. See the passages quoted from Victorinus and Berengau-

dus, in note ^u, p. 29, and Dr. Adams on the Sealed Book, chap. iii.

I hope to have another opportunity of pointing out to you the remarkable parallelism which exists between this vision, and the well known prophecy in the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, in which our Lord made known to His disciples the signs of His coming, and of the end of the world; at present it must suffice to observe, that in both prophecies two great events are foretold as precursors of His coming; namely, first, a season of war, famine, pestilence, and death; and secondly, the persecution and martyrdom of His followers.

In both prophecies also these judgments are instantly succeeded by the coming of the Son of Man: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days" (said our blessed Lord to His disciples) "shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not shed her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory¹."

Compare this description with the revelation that was made to the Apostle on the opening of the sixth Seal, and say if the events foretold are not manifestly identical: "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake: and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven

¹ Matt. xxiv. 29, 30.

fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: FOR THE GREAT DAY OF HIS WRATH IS COME, AND WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO STAND^{*}?

Who can doubt that these words describe the great and fearful day of final judgment; and that the whole vision of the Seals, parallel as it clearly is with our Saviour's prophecy delivered on the Mount of Olives, is intended to foretell "the signs of His coming, and of the end of the world!"

^{*} Rev. vi. 12-17.

¹ And yet it may seem strange to those who are not acquainted with commentators on the Revelation, that there is nothing in which they are less unanimous than in the interpretation of this prediction. Mr. Faber (in his *Sacred Calendar*, vol. ii. p. 324) considers it as fulfilled in the overthrow of Paganism, and establishment of Christianity, beginning with the edict of Constantine, A. D. 313; and the same interpretation for substance, although with some variations, is given by Mede, Whis-

ton, Fleming, Daubuz, Bishop Newton, Lowman, and many others. Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Habershon, with Mr. Frere, suppose it to signify the French Revolution in 1789. Vitringa interprets it of the future abolition of Anti-Christianity, Popery, Monachism, and Episcopacy (*Anacrisis Apoc.* p. 293). Rosenmüller says, "*Ipsa Hierosolymorum et reipublicæ Judaicæ eversio, atque totalis cladis Judæorum imagine prophetica ob oculos quasi ponitur:*" and the same interpretation is adopted by Wetstein, Grotius,

2. On the opening of the seventh Seal a new series of visions was displayed to the Apostle; and it is manifest that if the sixth Seal be intended to describe the day of final retribution, the events foretold in the succeeding visions cannot be supposed to succeed chronologically the fulfilment of the former seals, unless we suppose them to be such as shall follow the great Day of the wrath of the Lamb, and the end of this present dispensation.

But we shall see by an examination of the vision of the Seven Trumpets, which followed on the open-

Hammond and Bossuet ; although the latter adds, “ On en peut faire encore application à la chute de l’empire romain. Mais, et ces paroles, et tout le reste qu’on vient de voir, regardent aussi le dernier jugement.” (In Apoc. vi. 16).

Of the more ancient commentators, Aretas interprets the sixth seal of the prodigies at the death of Christ. Ambrosiaster, or Berengaudus, and Rupertus (A. D. 1111) of the destruction of Jerusalem. Aureolus and De Lyra of the persecution of Dioclesian, “ quando Christiani montibus, i. e. beatis in cœlo, eos invocantes, dixerunt: *cadite*, id est, *protegitte* nos.” But all the rest, Victorinus, Primasius, Tychonius, Haymo, Bede, &c. interpret the passage of the last Judgment.

The following is Doddridge’s statement of the argument which has induced so many to refuse to receive the sixth seal in its plain meaning, as a prophecy of the last judgment: “ As

it appears, by comparing one part of this book with another, that the last *seal* made way for, and introduced the *trumpets*; and the last *trumpet* the *vials*; it is justly argued, that there is a reference to a series of events, successively following each other; and consequently, this passage cannot refer to the *final judgment*; but to some great and spreading calamity, in which the hand of Christ should appear.” (Family Expos. note ⁿ, on Rev. vi. 17). But surely it is much more evident that this prophecy describes the last judgment, than that there is “ a reference to a series of events successively following each other;” and therefore, it seems much more safe to reverse the argument, and to say, that as the sixth seal is so manifestly the Day of Judgment, therefore, the visions of the Apocalypse must be considered as synchronous, not consecutive, in their fulfilment.

ing of the seventh Seal, that it also ends with the establishment of the kingdom of Christ; setting forth in a more minute detail, with new particulars of great interest and importance, some of the same events that were before revealed to the Apostle in the vision of the Seals^m. To this fact I shall hereafter have occasion more particularly to call your attention; and therefore I shall only ask you at present to consider the words with which the seventh Trumpet concludes; which manifestly bring us to the same period as before; namely, the coming of Christ to judgment, and the end of the world. "And the seventh angel sounded: and there were great voices in heaven, saying; the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever:" and immediately after this, the four-and-twenty elders are represented as worshipping God, and giving thanks, saying, "we give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned; and the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great: and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earthⁿ."

^m This is admitted by Bossuet (on ch. vii. 1), "C'est une chose ordinaire dans l'Apocalypse, comme dans les autres prophéties, de montrer premièrement les choses en général et plus

confusément, comme de loin, pour ensuite les déclarer par ordre et dans un plus grand détail, comme si on les avait sous les yeux."

ⁿ Rev. xi. 17, 18.

Is not this, therefore, a plain and unequivocal proof, that the vision of the Trumpets, like the vision of the Seals, terminates in the coming of our Lord, and the establishment of His kingdom? And does it not necessarily follow, that if these visions have the same termination, they cannot be successive in their fulfilment; and that whether they be found to begin at the same chronological period or not, they must at least synchronize in their conclusions?

3. In the next vision, representing what the Apostle calls "a great wonder," or sign (*σημείον*), — namely, the Woman clothed with the Sun, her contest with the dragon, and the rise of two terrible beasts, the one from the sea, the other from the earth,—we are likewise brought to the same period. After minutely describing the character and actions of the two beasts;—which, as I hope on some future occasion to show you, are only an enlarged and more particular account of the events foretold in the preceding visions of the Seals and Trumpets;—this prophecy concludes by the announcement that "the hour of God's judgment is come;" and by the solemn proclamation of the final overthrow of Babylon, "that great city, which made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." After which an angel with a sharp sickle is commanded, "Thrust in thy sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe: and the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and

cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God°."

4. This is followed by another sign (ἄλλο σημεῖον), namely, the seven angels having the seven vials of wrath, containing the seven last plagues, in which is "filled up (ἐτετέλεισθη) the wrath of God^p."

This vision is manifestly supplemental to the former, and pre-supposes it. It begins at a period subsequent to the commencement of the former vision; for it opens by exhibiting to the Apostle "them that had gotten the victory over the beast and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name," who were seen in glory, standing on the sea of glass, "having the harps of God^q." It ends, however, at a period short of the termination of the former visions, bringing us at its conclusion, not to the great Day of final account, but to the fall of Babylon, and the consequences of that event which are immediately to usher in the Day of Christ's coming. "And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath: and every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent, and men blasphemed God, because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great^r."

But the most remarkable circumstance in this and

° Rev. xiv. 18, 19.

^p Rev. xv. 1.

^q Ver. 2.

^r Rev. xvi. 19-21.

the preceding vision (a circumstance to which I desire especially to call your attention, as confirmatory of our present argument), is this; that Babylon is introduced into both visions as a power in existence, and well known at the period to which they refer; and yet the rise of Babylon, and the particular account of her iniquities, as well as the full description of her fall, and its consequences, are reserved for the next vision which follows that of the seven Vials. A similar remark may be made on the prophecy of the two witnesses, which was revealed to the Apostle immediately before the sounding of the seventh Trumpet. In this prophecy "the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit" is spoken of as in being at the time referred to; inasmuch as it is foretold, that he shall "make war against the witnesses, and shall overcome them, and kill them"; and yet the rise of this beast is described in a subsequent vision. It is manifest, therefore, that the vision of the beasts, although it was not exhibited to the Apostle until after the sounding of the seventh Trumpet, must nevertheless synchronize with a prophecy which was given to him at the end of the sixth Trumpet; and must consequently be regarded as supplemental to that prophecy, explaining in detail the tyranny of the beast, whose existence is there but briefly alluded to, and whose great and universal power is assumed, or implied in his victory over the witnesses⁵.

⁵ Rev. xi. 7.

⁶ The synchronisms occur-

ring in the visions of the woman and the beasts (ch. xii.-xiv.),

It is clear, therefore, and unquestionable, that these visions relate to synchronous events; and that

of the seven vials (ch. xv. xvi.), and in the vision of Babylon, (ch. xvii.—xxii.), are fully acknowledged by Mede, and by many others. Mede's treatise, entitled "*Clavis Apocalyptica seu vaticiniorum Apocalypticorum Synchronismus et ordo*," is among the most valuable of his prophetic writings. He divides the Apocalypse into two great prophecies; the first commencing with the seals, and ending with the third woe or seventh trumpet, when "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ" (ch. xi. 15): the second commencing with the vision of the woman, the dragon, and beasts (ch. xii.), and continued to the end of the book. In the second prophecy he notes the following synchronisms: 1. The beast with seven heads and ten horns must synchronize with the woman clothed with the sun, the treading under foot of the holy city, and the witnesses; 2. also with the two-horned beast; 3. also with Babylon; and 4. with the 144,000 virgins: 5. The battle with St. Michael he supposes to synchronize with the measurement of the temple; and 6. the outpouring of the seven vials with the latter part of the reign of Babylon and the beast.

On comparing the two prophecies he acknowledges the following synchronisms: 1, the beginning of the beast with the

seventh seal, or the beginning of the trumpets; 2, the destruction of the beast with the end of the sixth trumpet; 3, the war of the Dragon and St. Michael with the first six seals; 4, the seven vials with the sixth trumpet; 5, the millennial period of the binding of Satan with the seventh trumpet, and with the reign of Christ, and the new Jerusalem; 6, the palm-bearing multitude (c. vii. 9) with the same millennial period, and the seventh trumpet.

The synchronisms in this part of the Apocalypse are also admitted by Mr. Faber. He supposes the prophecy to divide itself into three parts: the first (ch. v. to ix. inclusive), being the first portion of the larger sealed book, predicts events in regular chronological order, from the year B. C. 657, to A. D. 1697. The second part, containing "the episode of the little open book," consist of five synchronizing prophecies, beginning from the period of the sounding of the fifth trumpet (and, therefore, partially synchronizing with ch. ix.), and comprehending events, from A. D. 604, to the consummation of all things. These five synchronous prophecies are, 1, Ch. xi., predicting the history of the Waldenses and Albigenes, A. D. 604 to 1689, with the events foretold by the seventh trumpet, from A. D. 1789, to the end of the world; 2, Ch. xii., predict-

the order in which they were exhibited to the Apostle is no criterion of the chronological order in which the events foretold shall be fulfilled.

5. The vision of Babylon, or of the woman sitting upon the scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, may be considered as supplemental to the two visions of the beasts, and of the seven Vials of wrath, intended to explain those passages of them in which the fall of Babylon is briefly foretold. Or rather we may perhaps say, that these three visions, although distinct as to the manner in which they were exhibited to the Apostle, are in reality parts only of one and the same prediction: and it is remarkable that the vision of Babylon terminates, like the seals and trumpets, in the great Day of wrath, and the final establishment of the kingdom of Christ. The doom of Babylon is proclaimed by the voice of a mighty angel; by another voice, the Voice of the Almighty Himself from heaven; and by the significant action of a great millstone cast with violence into the sea^u. And this complete and sudden destruction of a flourishing and glorious city, in whose welfare the kings and merchants of the earth had so great an interest, is followed immediately by the coming of Christ, who is seen

ing the Papal apostacy, A. D. 604, the rise of infidelity, the French Revolution, and subsequent events, to A. D. 1865; 3, Ch. xiii. 1-11, the secular Roman empire; 4, Ch. xiii. 12-18, the papal Roman empire; 5, Ch. xiv., the events of the same period from A. D. 604, to the end of the world. The

third and last part of the Apocalypse (Ch. xv. to xxii) contains what Mr. Faber considers as the second portion of the sealed book, beginning A. D. 1789, and extending to the consummation of all things. See the Sacred Calendar of Prophecy. Lond. 1828.

^u Rev. xviii. 1, 2, 4, 21.

approaching on a white horse "clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, and his name was called **THE WORD OF GOD.**" And "the armies which were in heaven" were seen to follow Him "upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." And he had "on His vesture, and on His thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS**."^v

That this sublime description denotes the second advent of our Saviour cannot, I presume, be reasonably questioned^w: and it is followed by the destruction of Antichrist, whom the Lord, as we know from other prophecies, "shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming^x." "And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone^y." After

^v Rev. xix. 11-16.

^w An opportunity will hereafter occur of considering this vision more at length, and of inquiring into the evidence for supposing that the Rider on the white horse can be no other than our Lord Himself: it is only necessary, therefore, to say here, that notwithstanding the express statement, that "His name is called the Word of God," there is nothing which commen-

tators on the Apocalypse are more unwilling to admit: the ancients, however, were unanimous in adopting the literal interpretation, for which it may be enough to refer to Lactantius, lib. vii. *De vita beata*, c. 17 and 18. See also Lacunza, *Venida del Messias*, Part ii. Phæn. iv. (English Translation, vol. i. p. 267, sq.)

^x 2 Thess. ii. 8.

^y Rev. xix. 19, 20.

which the whole prophecy concludes with a magnificent description of the final establishment of the kingdom of Christ; the new heaven and the new earth; and "the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband^a."

Thus then I think it must appear evident, that each vision of the Apocalypse, except that of the Vials, which is plainly supplemental to the rest, terminates with the same great event, namely the coming of the Lord in glory and majesty, to take vengeance on His enemies, to give reward to His servants, deliverance to His saints, and to establish His kingdom for ever. Inasmuch, therefore, as this event is described at the conclusion of each of the apocalyptic visions, it follows, that these visions, although consecutive in the order in which they were exhibited to St. John, are not consecutive, but synchronous, in their fulfilment: that their accomplishment is to be sought for not in mediæval history, or in modern European revolutions, but in a period still to come: that they relate exclusively to the circumstances preceding, accompanying, or immediately following the second advent of our Lord; namely, to the judgments, the trials, the persecutions, which await the Christian Church in that short and awful period of which our Lord Himself has said, "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved, but for the elects' sake those days shall be shortened^a."

^a xxi. 1, 2.

^a Matt. xxiv. 22.

LECTURE III.

G

Φάσκουσι δὲ κατὰ τῆς ᾿Αποκαλύψεως τάδε χλευάζοντες. τί με φησὶν ὠφελεῖ ἡ ᾿Αποκάλυψις Ἰωάννου λέγουσά μοι περὶ ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλων καὶ ἑπτὰ σαλπίγγων; οὐκ εἰδότες, πῶς ἀναγκαία καὶ ὠφέλιμα τοιαῦτα ὑπῆρξεν ἐν τῇ ὁρθότητι τοῦ κηρύγματος. Ὅσα γὰρ ἦν ἐν νόμῳ καὶ ἐν προφήταις σκοτεινὰ καὶ αἰνιγματώδη, ταῦτα ὁ Κύριος φκονόμησε διὰ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος εἰς ἡμῶν σωτηρίαν τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννῃ ἀποκαλύψαι· τὰ ἐκεῖσε σκοτεινὰ, ὥδε εἰς πνευματικὰ καὶ ἔκδηλα κηρύττων. Epiphanius. Adv. Hær. lib. ii. tom. i. n. 32. Paris, 1622.

LECTURE III.

REV. vii. 13, 14.

“And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

It seemed necessary, in order to prepare you for the consideration of the momentous prophecies which are to be the subject of the present course of Lectures, to give, in the first instance, some general account of the principal theories that have been proposed for the interpretation of the Apocalypse in ancient and modern times, with a view to point out the probable cause of their almost admitted failure. I speak of their failure as admitted, because I think it can scarcely be denied that commentators on the Apocalypse have failed to produce any permanent conviction in the minds of sober and serious inquirers: that no one interpretation has received the cordial sanction of the Church^a; and that it still re-

^a To use the language of Mr. Maitland (who is speaking of the various systems of interpreting the supposed period of 1260 years), “Surely, if any one of these had been Aaron’s rod it

mains an open question amongst Christians, in what way, and indeed whether, the prophecies of the Apocalypse have received their accomplishment.

I endeavoured to show you that the cause of this failure is to be traced to the false views, so generally adopted by commentators, of the design and structure of the prophecy; and I ventured to suggest some principles of interpretation, to serve as the foundation of a more sound exposition. If the arguments that appeared to me conclusive are of any real weight, they will perhaps have satisfied you that the Apocalypse is a prophecy of the second coming of the Lord—of the signs and precursors and accompanying circumstances of that event; and not a prophecy which has been in course of fulfilment since the Apostles' days, and of which a part, and a part only, is yet to come: that its accomplishment, therefore, will occupy, not a long series of many centuries, but a short space of time: and that its visions are to be interpreted, not as predicting events which are chronologically to succeed each other in the order in which the visions themselves are narrated by the Apostle, but as repetitions of the same great Prophecy of our Lord's second coming: each successive vision predicting the same events foretold in those

would have swallowed up the others by this time. Surely it would have wrought something like 'general conviction.' Instead of that, system after system appears; each has, perhaps, those who read it and admire its ingenuity or its learning; but, I can

honestly say, that, to the best of my recollection, I have never found that *any one* system of interpretation had carried conviction of its truth to the mind of *any individual* whom I have questioned on the subject."—Second Inquiry, pp. 86, 87.

that went before, with new circumstances, and additional particulars, which the preceding visions had omitted, or less prominently put forward.

It may be well, however, to remind you, that although it was necessary to make these general observations on the principles of interpretation to be adopted in the study of the Apocalypse, and although I may have occasion from time to time to recur to what I have said of the general structure and design of the book, yet my principal object must be to direct your attention to that particular portion of its prophecies which relates more especially to the coming of the great Antichrist, and the apostacy of the latter times.

With this object in view, therefore, I proceed to examine in detail each of the visions upon which some general remarks have already been made.

I. The vision which must first occupy our attention is that which is described in the fifth and two following chapters of the Apocalypse, in which the Apostle beheld, in the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne, a book "written within and on the back side, and sealed with seven seals." And it was in a remarkable manner made evident to him, that "no man in heaven nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, was alone found worthy to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof^b.

^b Rev. v. 1-5.

I take for granted that you are all familiar with the circumstances of this remarkable vision: and, therefore, without stopping to read it to you at length, I shall proceed to make some general observations upon it, preparatory to the consideration of its interpretation*.

* It will be seen that the following discussion proceeds on the hypothesis that the events exhibited in vision to the Apostle in Rev. v. are prophetical; representing one of those future events of which it is the object of the Apocalypse to forewarn the Church. The great majority of modern interpreters, however, suppose the fourth and fifth chapters to be merely introductory, and the prophetical portion of this part of the Apocalypse to begin with the sixth chapter. See Dr. Adams "On the sealed Book," part ii. ch. 1, where the opinions of Mede, Bishop Newton, Lowman and Woodhouse upon this subject are quoted. Of more modern commentators, who subscribe to the same opinion, it may suffice to mention Mr. Faber (*Sacred Calendar*, Book ii. ch. 4), Mr. Cunningham (*Dissert. on the Seals and Trumpets*, 4th Edit. 1843), who make no allusion to the fifth chapter as prophetical of any future event; and Mr. Keith (*Signs of the Times*, Book iii. ch. 1), who supposes the sealed book to be identical with the Book of Revelation, and consequently the vision in which it is seen to be simply introductory.

Mr. Burgh considers the sealed book to be "the book of Christ's inheritance, that is, the book which contains the account of the redemption of Christ's inheritance and purchased possession," an opinion which does not appear very intelligible (*Expos. of the Revel.* 4th Edit. p. 130). Mr. Govett understands Mr. Burgh to mean "probably the book of the forfeited inheritance of man," which does not much mend the matter (*The Revel. Literal and Future*, p. 20). But neither of these views (for they can hardly be considered the same) seems to take the sealed book as prefiguring an event future. "The book of Christ's inheritance" must have been received by Him before His incarnation: but the event here portrayed is evidently one which is to take place after our Lord's Crucifixion and Ascension, inasmuch as He is represented in the vision as a Lamb slain, and endowed with power, "having seven horns and seven eyes." The same remark may be made if we are to understand the book as denoting "the book of the forfeited inheritance of man;" and to neither opinion do the contents of the book, disclosed

1. In the first place then, you will remember, that the fact of no created being in heaven, in earth, or under the earth, being found able to open the book, was a source of deep and poignant grief to the Apostle. "I wept much," he says, "because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon^d."

2. It is further to be observed, that the whole assembly exhibited to the Apostle in the vision, was filled with triumphant joy and exultation, when the Lamb was seen "to take the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne." And praise and adoration, and thanksgiving, are immediately offered up to Him that sat upon the throne, and to the Lamb, first by the four beasts and four-and-twenty elders, the representatives of the Church triumphant^e, then by the innumerable company of

on the opening of the seals, seem very clearly to agree.

The reasons given by Dr. Adams for considering the sealed book as a symbol of one of those future events which are foretold in this prophecy, appear to the author of these pages conclusive: and he is happy to strengthen himself by the authority of a writer whose work may be referred to as a favourable specimen of the spirit in which an inquiry into the true meaning of the prophecies should be conducted.

^d Ver. 4.

^e That the beasts and elders are intended to denote the Church in glory, is evident from

this, that they are represented as giving thanks for redemption; "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for Thou wast slain, and *hast redeemed us* to God by Thy blood," &c., ver. 9. Mr. Tyso, however, denies this inference, and maintains, that when the prophet says, "they sung a new song," &c. (ver. 9.), he means, not the beasts and elders, but *the saints*, who had been mentioned just before, when it was said that the beasts and elders had every one of them "golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints." But besides that this interpretation seems highly unnatural, inas-

holy angels, and lastly, by "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea."

3. Again, it is worthy of note that the success of the Lamb in taking possession of the book is spoken of as *a victory*. "He hath *prevailed*," said the celestial elder to the Apostle,—*ἐνίκησεν ἀνοιξάου*,—*Vicit Leo de Tribu Juda aperire librum*,—"He hath been victorious in opening the book, and in loosing the seven seals thereof."

4. Furthermore, He who is by the Elder spoken of as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David," was immediately after seen by the Apostle under the similitude of "a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth."

Bearing these particulars carefully in mind^g, we

much as the mention of the saints occurs only incidentally, there is nothing in the vision to lead us to think that there was any assembly of saints present.—Tyso, *Elucidation of the Prophecies*, p. 124.

^f Ver. 5.

^g The circumstances above noted appear to have been overlooked by most of the common theories proposed for the interpretation of this part of the prophecy. A great number of commentators, especially of the ancients, suppose the sealed book to represent the Old Testament, or the New Testament, or the entire volume of Holy Scrip-

ture; others maintain that it signifies the Apocalypse itself. To *some* of those theories it may be objected, that they suppose the delivery of the sealed book to represent a past (past, that is, at the time when the vision was exhibited to the apostle) and not a future event; but to *all* there is this objection, that they do not sufficiently explain why "no man in heaven, nor in earth, nor under the earth, was *able* to open the book, *or so much as to look thereon*." The Church is surely not in this total ignorance of the contents of Holy Scripture; nor is the Scripture or any por-

may now proceed to consider the interpretation of the vision.

tion of it, so obscure, as that it should be impossible in the nature of things for any created being to open or read therein. It is true we are not "worthy" of this knowledge, and perhaps it may be true (though who shall presume to say so) that no created being in heaven, in earth, or under the earth, is *worthy* of that revelation of God's will which has been given to us; but this will not suffice to reconcile the theories alluded to with the sacred text. For, in point of fact, some knowledge of sacred Scripture, has been vouchsafed to man, however unworthy. *All* Scripture was written for our learning; and therefore it can scarcely be said of the Book of Holy Scripture, or of any portion thereof, that no man is able to open it, or so much as to look thereon.

The more modern theories, which suppose the sealed book to denote the book of God's Providence; the book of God's secret foreknowledge and predestination; the book of God's secret purposes of vengeance upon the Jews; the book of God's covenant of redemption; and other similar expositions, are open more or less to the same objection; inasmuch as many things on all these subjects have been made known to the Church from the beginning, although the full fathoming of them is doubtless beyond the reach of any created intellect; and these theories are further defective,

as not explaining why the Apostle should "weep much" at discovering what he must necessarily have known long before, namely, that the secret purposes and decrees of God were unfathomable, and His ways past finding out.

The peculiar opinion lately put forward by Dr. Adams is liable to similar objections. He maintains that the sealed book is the Old Testament, "represented as *sealed*, to intimate that its contents are in some manner hidden from mankind," and therefore "its unsealing (he says) will be equivalent to a new revelation." The Old Testament, he tells us, became sealed when the sacred autographs of Moses and the prophets, "the authentic copy of the word of God," were carried away by the Romans from the flames of the temple, according to the express statement of Josephus, and safely conveyed to Rome. The discovery of these sacred books, and the reproduction of the authentic copies, is the event predicted in the vision, and symbolized by the opening of the seven-sealed book.—(The opening of the sealed Book, part ii. chap. 2, p. 62).

To this theory it seems obvious to object, that if the loss of the authentic copies of the Old Testament be the sealing up of that part of holy Scripture, the New Testament must be equally sealed to us, inasmuch as its authentic copy is equally

And here the most obvious remarks which suggest themselves are, first, that the event foretold in

beyond our reach. Besides, does not Dr. Adams' hypothesis require us to suppose a degree of obscurity in the Old Testament which would go far to deprive the Church of its testimony as a part of the revelation from which her faith is derived? If its unsealing, that is, the discovery and publication of its authentic copies, will be "equivalent to a new revelation," what opinion are we to form of the present text of our Hebrew Bible, and how can we be sure that the words we read there are a part of revelation at all? It appears to the writer, that Dr. Adams has suggested a very insufficient reply to this objection, in Part iv. ch. 2, where he partially considers it.

But waving this, is there anything in the loss, or rather the temporary concealment, of the authentic Scriptures (for they are now, Dr. Adams tells us, in the safe keeping of Rome) so deeply mysterious, that neither man nor angel can by possibility discover their lurking place—that the everlasting Son of God Himself alone can recover and restore them to the Church? It is the policy of the Court of Rome, according to our author (p. 211), to keep "the voluminous collection of Biblical Manuscripts" in the Vatican Library "*literally sealed up*, through the jealousy of the sovereign Pontiffs, lest they should overthrow the authority

of the Vulgate." But even supposing it to be true that the Vatican MSS. are thus "*literally sealed up*," would Dr. Adams have us believe that the Pontiff's seal can be broken only by Omnipotence?—that no man in heaven, in earth, neither under the earth, is able to open it, or so much as to look thereon?

The following is a list of the principal opinions on the meaning of the sealed book, as held by commentators ancient and modern.

1. Holy Scripture. This is the opinion of Tychonius, Haymo, Berengaudus, Ambrose, Rupertus Tuitiensis, Richard. de S. Victore, Andreas, Bede, Ansbert, Anselm, Joachim, Hugo, Origen (see Dr. Adams on the sealed book, p. 85, sq.); Eusebius (*Demonstr. Evang. lib. viii. c. 2*, quoted by Dr. Adams, p. 90); St. Jerome (in *Isai.*, xxii.); St. Gregory the Great (*Dial. lib. iv. c. 42*); and the great majority of the ancients. See Corn. a Lapide in loc.

2. The Old Testament.—See the authorities cited by Dr. Adams, on the sealed Book, part ii. ch. 4; although some of them belong more properly to the preceding head.

3. The authentic copies of the Old Testament Scriptures.—Adams.

4. The New Testament.—Daubuz.

5. The Apocalypse.—Corn.

this prophecy must be some event of great and transcendent importance; an event, the supposed impossibility of which caused grief and sorrow to the Apostle, while its subsequent fulfilment brought joy and thanksgiving to all the servants of God, both men and angels, in heaven and in earth. Secondly, that this event shall be brought about by the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, who is seen as combining in His own Person the twofold character of a Lion, and of a Lamb,—“a Lamb, as it had been slain”—a Lamb en-

a Lapide, Mede, Bossuet, Keith (Signs of the Times, 7th Edit. vol. i. p. 180).

6. Part of the Apocalypse: viz. that part which contains the seven seals. Alcasar (quoted by Corn. a Lapide); Calmet in loc. Faber (Sacred Calendar, vol. ii. p. 283, sq.).

7. Christ.—Etherius (Biblioth. Patrum. Lugd. 1677, tom. xiii. p. 379, H.); Paschasius (ib. tom. xiv. p. 359, C); Hilar. præf. in Psalm. quoted by Corn. a Lapide.

8. “Chronologia mundi.”—Ambrose, quoted by Corn. a Lapide.

9. The Decrees of God with respect to man generally.—Andreas Cæsariensis and Aureolus (quoted by Corn. a Lapide); De Sacy, Lowman, Ewald, Vitringa, Rosenmüller.

10. God’s foreknowledge, ἡ πάντοτε τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνιπίληπτος μνήμη. Ecumenius, De Lyra, Aureolus, Prado.

11. “Chirographum peccati Adæ, puta obligatio et reatus peccati, quo Adam se et nos

Deo Vindici obstrinxit.” See Corn. a Lapide.

12. God’s secret purposes upon the Jews.—Hammond, Grotius. “*Libellus repudiî a Deo scriptus nationi Judaicæ.*”—Wetstein.

13. God’s secret purposes for the Christian Church. “Volumen in quo futuri Ecclesiæ Christianæ casus consignati sunt.” Eichhorn.

14. The book of God’s covenant of Redemption. Lacunza. See note, p. 97.

15. “The Book of Christ’s inheritance,” viz. “the book which contains the account of the redemption of Christ’s inheritance and purchased possession.”—Burgh (4th Edit.)

16. “The book of the forfeited inheritance of Man.”—Govett.

This is not intended as a complete enumeration, but merely to give the reader a general view of the opinions of some of the principal commentators, ancient and modern, on this particular point.

dowed with divine power and knowledge, "having seven horns, and seven eyes;" a slain Lamb, to whom, notwithstanding His apparent weakness, "all power is given both in heaven and in earth," and who is exalted after His humiliation to the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Thus the atonement and exaltation of our Lord are represented in the vision as the ground of that infinite merit in Him—a merit which could belong to no created being—which enabled Him to open the book. And accordingly the beasts and elders, in their song of thanksgiving, ascribe to this very cause His everlasting worthiness, or, if we may so say, His *right* to the book. "Thou art worthy," they say, "to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: FOR Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and we shall reign on the earth^h."

The event, therefore, pourtrayed in the vision by the delivery of the mysterious book to the Lamb, must be some event intimately connected with, and a consequence of, our Lord's atoning sacrifice and work of redemption: which can be brought about by Him alone, because no other blood but the blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, could take away the sins of the world—because there is "none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

What this great and glorious event is, may per-

^h Ver. 10.

haps be inferred from observing that the song of triumph uttered by the innumerable hosts of angels, upon the delivery of the book to the Lamb, manifestly takes that symbolical action as equivalent to a conferring upon Him of all power, and strength, and glory: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." And the same action is also followed by the immediate submission of all creation: "and every creature which is in heaven, and in the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and everⁱ."

It would seem to follow, therefore, that the event foretold by the vision of our Lord, as a Lamb slain, taking the seven-sealed-book from the Hand of Him that sat upon the throne, is this, that the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, shall at length "prevail" to subdue all the enemies of His Church, to receive the willing homage of the universe, and to cause the kingdoms of this world to become "the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ;" "to take unto Him His great power, and reign" without further opposition from sin and Satan, for ever and ever^j.

Examples of the use of the symbol of the delivery of a book, may be found in other Scriptures, and

ⁱ Ver. 12, 13.

^j Comp. Rev. xi. 15-19.

its meaning will perhaps be thereby determined. The first instance I shall mention, is that of the vision which was vouchsafed to Ezekiel, when he was called to the prophetic office, and commissioned to go and speak to the house of Israel. In that vision, after a description of the cherubim, and symbolical representations of the ministering spirits who do the will of God, the prophet describes "the likeness of a throne," and, "upon the likeness of a throne, the likeness as the appearance of a man upon it:" and this he tells us was "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord^k."

So far, then, there is a remarkable similitude between the two visions, in both of which the prophets who beheld them were translated in spirit into the immediate presence of the Almighty. Ezekiel goes on to say, that he received from Him that sat upon the throne, a direct commission to preach to the rebellious house of Israel, and that in connexion with this commission, "a hand was sent unto him, and lo! a roll of a book was therein." This roll he was commanded to eat: "Moreover, He said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest: eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat the roll^l."

The delivery of the roll to the prophet, therefore, was the act of investiture, if I may so say, by which he was admitted to his office, and commissioned to preach to the house of Israel; and he was com-

^k Ezek. i.

^l Ezek. ii. iii. 1-3.

manded to eat the roll, to intimate that he was to speak to them, not in his own words, or from his own thoughts and opinions, but in the words of Him whose messenger he was; for immediately after he had eaten the roll, the Lord said unto him, "Son of Man go, and get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak WITH MY WORDS unto them^m."

A second instance will be found in the Apocalypse itself; where, you will remember, St. John is described as having received his commission in a manner exactly similar to the investiture of Ezekiel. He beheld "a mighty angel clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: and he had in his hand a little book open." This book the apostle was commanded to take from the hands of the angel, and to eat; and when he had done so, the angel said unto him, "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kingsⁿ."

It seems, therefore, to be beyond a question, that in the instances of Ezekiel and St. John, the delivery of a book into the hands of those prophets was employed as the symbolical act by which they were formally commissioned to prophesy in the Name of God;—Ezekiel, to speak with His authority to the rebellious Israel;—St. John, to prophesy before many peoples and nations and tongues^o.

There is, however, this difference between the case

^m Ezek. iii. 4.

ⁿ Rev. x. 8-11.

^o It may not be altogether undeserving of notice, that the

of these prophets and the vision now before us, that they were both commanded *to eat* the books delivered to them; to intimate (as we have seen in the case of Ezekiel) that the prophet was to speak not in his own words, but in the words of God. If this be so, it will explain the reason why no such symbolical action was performed by our Lord in the vision we are considering. His taking the book from the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne was the symbol of His accepting an office for which no created being was found competent; but having accepted it, He executed the commission by His own inherent attributes of Deity. He who was "in the beginning with God, and who was God;" "begotten of His Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God," needed no com-

same ceremony of delivering a book, has been, and still continues to be, in use in the Church as the symbol of conferring their commission upon those who are admitted into Holy Orders. It appears by the fourth Council of Carthage (A.D. 398.) that the Gospels were anciently held over the head of the newly ordained bishop by two of the consecrating prelates, while a third gave the benediction; (Conc. Carth. iv. c. 2; Hardouin, vol. i. p. 979. See also the Apostolic Constitutions, lib. viii. c. 4, where, however, the book of the Gospels is directed to be held over the head of the or-

daind by two deacons, the three bishops being engaged in the consecration); and the same rite is alluded to by St. Chrysostom, as used in the ordination of priests: *ἐν ταῖς χειροτονίαις τῶν ἱερέων, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπὶ κεφαλῆς τίθεται, ἵνα μάθῃ ὁ χειροτονούμενος, ὅτι τὴν ἀληθινὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τιάραν λαμβάνει.* De laudib. evang. quoted by Habert. Archieraticon seu Pontificale Græcor. p. 79. In our own Prayer Book the ceremony of delivering a New Testament to the deacons, and a Bible to the priests and bishops ordained, is still in use.

municated wisdom, or strength, or knowledge, for the due performance of the office in which He is again to visit our world, to give deliverance to His saints, to take upon Him His great power and reign, and to become the Judge of the quick and the dead^p.

It will be observed also, that in the case of Ezekiel and of St. John, the books were open; this is expressly stated of the book eaten by St. John, and

^p There seems good ground also for the parallel which Lanza has drawn between the Lamb, being invested with all power in heaven and earth, by taking the book from the hands of Him that sat on the throne, and the similar investiture of "one like unto the Son of man," in the prophecy of Daniel. "Is not this (he says) manifestly a confirmation, or a more enlarged and circumstantial relation of the text of Daniel? A wonderful person 'like unto the son of man,' says the prophet, 'came as with the clouds of heaven,' and entering, without any impediment or opposition, into the great council of God, presented Himself, or was presented, before His throne, and there received from the hand of God, power, honour, and a kingdom: and I beheld 'one like unto the Son of man come with the clouds of heaven, and come to the ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him,' &c.... Dan. viii. 13, 14. St. John says, that this same Son of man, presented before the throne of God under the emblem of a Lamb as it had been slain, received from His hand a closed and sealed book,

which He alone could open, and which He did open at the very time, in the sight of all the assessors and spectators with the admiration and exultation of them all; and as the immediate consequence of this opening of the book, they all prostrated themselves before God and the Lamb, saying, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, &c.' . . . Rev. v., 12. Say now, my dear Sir, with sincerity, is not this the same mystery that Daniel speaks of? Is not this plainly to tell us, that the Lamb receiving a book from the hand of God, received in it power, honour, and a kingdom? Is it not to tell us plainly, that upon receiving the book and opening it, it proved to be the covenant of His Divine Father, wherein He constituted and declared Him heir of all things? Is not this plainly to tell us, that connected with this book, and the book itself, is the actual possession of all His inheritance: that is the power, the honour, and the kingdom?" Coming of the Messiah (Engl. Trans.) vol. ii. p. 102. Corrected by the original, vol. ii. p. 341. Lond. 1826.

may he inferred of Ezekiel's book also, inasmuch as he tells us that it was "spread before him," and that there was "written therein lamentation, and mourning, and woe." But the mysterious book presented to our Lord, although, like Ezekiel's book, it was "written within and on the back-side," was not open, but "sealed with seven seals;" and "no man was able to open the book, or to loose the seven seals thereof."

I conclude, therefore, that the seven-sealed book is the same of which our Lord Himself has said: "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God^p;" or in other words, that it denotes the office or commission with which our Lord, as the Lamb slain for our sins, and raised again for our justification, shall be invested, and in virtue of which He shall come again in glory to judge the world. If so then, the opening of the seals may be expected to make known the acts He is to perform in the execution of this His office, the condition in which He shall find His Church at His coming, and the manner in which He shall accomplish the destruction of her enemies^q.

^p Heb. x. 7; Ps. xl. 6.

^q The same view of this part of the vision appears to have occurred to Dr. Hales. He says: "And He came to the throne and took the book out of THE FATHER's right hand, in token of inauguration or formal investiture into His *universal and everlasting dominion*, to whom *all authority* was given in *heaven and earth*, as THE SON OF MAN (Dan. vii. 13, 14, Matt. xxviii. 18,) and

also as the great *Seer* or PROPHET OF GOD, to whom the *times* and the *seasons* were now *fully revealed* (Dan. ii. 20-22, Rom. xvi. 25), ver. 6, 7." Analysis of Chron. ii. p. 1301. See also Daubuz, who says on ch. v. 7: "This is the main ceremony of our Saviour's inauguration, by which His human Nature is invested with a divine Kingdom to be worshipped accordingly." Comm. on the Revel. p. 224.

In accordance with this expectation, as I shall now proceed to show, the revelations made on the opening of each seal, all pourtray the circumstances of our Lord's second coming; representing that event under various aspects, and, if we may so say, in various stages of development or completion.

Upon the opening of the first seal, there appeared "a white horse," and "He that sat on him had a bow; and a crown (*στέφανος*) was given unto Him, and He went forth conquering, and to conquer."

This, then, is the substance of our Lord's commission; He is to come again with glory, of which the crown of victory given to Him is the symbol; He is to appear the second time, not, as before, in weakness and humiliation, but "conquering and to conquer."

That our Lord Himself is represented by the horseman, in this portion of the vision, has been admitted by many commentators, both ancient and modern; and is strongly confirmed by the fact, that the emblem of a rider, on a white horse, is employed to denote the second coming of our Lord in another passage of the Apocalypse, where it can scarcely be doubted by any unprejudiced reader that He is intended, because we are expressly told that "His Name is called THE WORD OF GOD;" and that "on His vesture and on His thigh was a Name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS*."

It is worthy of remark, also, that our Saviour's second coming is represented in this vision not as

* Rev. vi. 2.

* Rev. xix. 11-16. See p. 79.

completed, but as in progress: His conquests are not yet fully made, but He is seen *going forth*, "conquering and to conquer." Hence the other horsemen, seen on the opening of the second, third, and fourth seals, are to be understood as representing the concomitant signs and immediate consequences of His coming: and it is a very old observation made by one of the most ancient commentators on the Apocalypse, whose writings are preserved¹, that the judgments predicted by the seals agree, even in the order in which they are portrayed, with the signs given by our Lord Himself in answer to the inquiry of the disciples: "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?"² For even though it be admitted (which, however, I do by no means admit), that many things in that memorable prophecy of our Saviour, had an apparent or primary fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem, and in the Jewish wars, yet it is impossible to consider the whole as fulfilled in those events, and it has therefore been in all ages³ regarded as intended to pre-

¹ Victorinus (A. D. 290), Biblioth. PP. Lugd. 1677, tom. iii. p. 414, sq. See the passage quoted by Dr. Adams, on the Sealed Book—p. 28. Rosenmüller takes the same view of the identity of this prediction with our Lord's prophecy, although he supposes both to refer only to the destruction of Jerusalem; his words are: "Sine dubio ante oculos habuit [B. Joannes] verba Christi, Matt. xxiv. 6-8, ita tamen, ut omnia suo more in figuras et signa

conversa produceret, vel potius in scena representaret." Schol. in c. vi. l. Mr. Burgh and Mr. Govett have also strongly advocated the same opinion.

² Matt. xxiv.

³ St. Augustin, in his valuable letter to Hesychius, Define seculi (Epist. 199, n. 26. Edit. Bened. tom. ii.), speaking of a supposed threefold sense of this prophecy, says, "Cum itaque signa dicat quæ ad ista tria pertinent, id est, ad excidium illius civitatis; ad adventum ejus in corpore suo,

dict mainly the future coming of the Lord to judge the world, to take vengeance on His enemies, and to give reward unto His saints.

In our Lord's prophecy, we are told, that among the signs of His coming shall be "wars and rumours of wars;" "nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom;" "famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places." And all these, He further tells us, shall be but "the beginning of sorrows".

The same judgments, and in the same order, are evidently predicted in the second, third and fourth seals: the horseman riding on a white horse, who goes forth, conquering and to conquer, and who is the only one of the four horsemen to whom a crown of victory is given, is accompanied by another on a red horse, to whom power was given "to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another, and there was given unto him a great sword." The angel of famine follows on a black horse, having a pair of balances in his hand, the emblem of scarcity;

quod est Ecclesia; ad adventum ejus in capite Ecclesiæ, quod est ipse: quod eorum signorum ad quod horum trium referendum sit, diligenti consideratione cernendum est, ne forte quod pertinet ad eversionem Jerusalem, ad finem sæculi referendum putemus; aut e contrario, quod ad finem sæculi pertinet affirmemus ad civitatis illius excidium pertinere; aut quod pertinet ad ejus adventum in corpore suo, quod est Ecclesia, dicamus pertinere ad ejus

adventum novissimum in corpore suo, quod est caput Ecclesiæ; aut rursus quod pertinet ad adventum ejus novissimum per seipsum, ad eum pertinere asseveremus adventum qui est per Ecclesiam." I quote this passage to shew that even those of the ancients who maintained the double sense, were unable altogether to deny that this prophecy related chiefly to our Lord's second Advent.

^w Matt. xxiv. 6-8.

and with him a voice proclaims the high price of the necessaries of life. And lastly: there was seen "a pale horse;" "and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him, and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth'."

It is remarkable also, that, on the opening of the next seal, these judgments, war and famine, and pestilence, which our Lord tells us will be at that period but "the beginning of sorrows," were followed, as He has also predicted, by the martyrdom of His followers: "*Then*" (He says) "shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake:"

' Rev. vi. 3-8. It is a remarkable circumstance, which does not seem to have been satisfactorily explained by commentators, that the appearance of each of the four horsemen is announced to the Apostle by one of the four Beasts, saying, "Come and see." I am not prepared to offer any interpretation of this, nor to say how far it is connected with the evident personality of the four riders.

Another circumstance worthy of note is the use of the plural in ver. 8—"It was given *unto them*," i. e. to the second, third, and fourth riders, for so the following words evidently imply: "it was given unto them to kill *with the sword* [the 'great sword,' namely, of the second

horseman], and with *hunger* [the famine produced by the third horseman], and with *Death* [the name of the fourth rider was *Death*], and beasts of the earth."

I am aware that the Latin Vulgate reads "*data est illi potestas*," referring this to the fourth rider only: and this reading is confirmed by the best MSS. of the Greek text (see Griesbach). In either case, however, the plain reference to the preceding seals would seem to represent these judgments as synchronous; and (if we adopt the reading of the Lat. Vulg.) presided over or directed by the fourth horseman, whose name was Death, and who is the only one of the four whose *name* is given.

and accordingly, in the vision before us, the Apostle beheld, under the altar, "the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held;" and they were heard to cry for vengeance upon "them that dwell in the earth." It is further remarkable, that this persecution and martyrdom of the faithful is followed, in both prophecies, as I shewed you in my last discourse², by "the sign of the Son of Man in heaven," the fearful day of wrath, in "which the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, shall hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and shall say to the mountains, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand³."

Now the circumstance here most particularly to be noted, in reference to the immediate subject of the present course of Lectures, is the fact which this prophecy reveals, in exact accordance with the predictions of Daniel and St. Paul, that a deadly persecution of the Church will be in active operation at the period of the second Advent of our Lord.

The subject is introduced in the form of a complaint from the souls of those who were slain for the Word of God, and the testimony which they held; they were seen by the apostle under the altar: "and

² See above, p. 70.

³ Rev. vi. 15-17.

they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" In answer to their complaint, they are admitted to new degrees of glory; white robes (*στολαὶ λευκαὶ*) are given to every one of them: and the purpose of God is made known to them, that they are still "to rest yet for a little season (*ἔτι χρόνον μικρόν*), until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled^b."

It is evident, therefore, that this part of the prophecy describes a period in that future persecution, when many shall have been already martyred, and their blood long crying to God for vengeance against their murderers: a period, too, which shall be but a short time only before the termination of the last persecution, in which the number of the martyrs is to be completed, and which is to be immediately followed, as we learn from the vision disclosed at the opening of the sixth seal, by the great and terrible day of the wrath of the Lamb.

This then is the testimony which I believe to be given to the Church by the prophecy before us: that wars and famine, pestilence and death in every shape and form, are to be the signs of our Lord's second coming; that a great and fearful persecution of the Church shall fulfil the number of the martyrs; and that then shall the end be. And you will per-

^b Rev. vi. 9, 10.

ceive that this plain and simple view of the prophecy renders it unnecessary for us to resort to any far-fetched or elaborate symbolical interpretations; we have closely adhered to the literal and obvious signification of the words, and the result has been a prediction which is in strict accordance, not only with our Lord's remarkable prophecy on the Mount of Olives, but with all that we have previously learned from other parts of Holy Scripture, of the coming of the Day of Christ.

With respect to other interpretations of this vision, I shall only make two or three very general remarks.

First; if we adopt any of the opinions advocated by modern commentators, for example, that the prophecy of the seals was fulfilled in the Jewish wars under the early Roman emperors, the Pagan persecutions of Christianity, or the subsequent history of the Empire or of the Church, we shall be unable to explain the remarkable circumstance, that no created intelligence was able to open the seven-sealed book, or so much as to look thereon. The opening of the book, according to these various theories, is only a part of the scenery (so to speak) of the prophecy, and can denote nothing beyond the communication to the Church of the prophetic information intended to be conveyed; and the events supposed to have been predicted, are not of that deeply mysterious nature that none but the blessed Son of God Himself could be made the instrument of revealing them to the Church. They are events of the same nature as those which had often before been made known to man through the instru-

mentality of Moses and the prophets, and which, when fulfilled, present no such remarkable character of mysteriousness. But if we regard the receiving of the book by the Lamb as the investiture of our Lord with an office which no created power could discharge, the delivering up to Him the kingdom and the power and the glory, of which He proceeds by the opening of the seals to take possession,—then we shall have no difficulty in understanding why it was that no man was found able to open the book, or so much as to look thereon: we shall have no difficulty in perceiving why it was that the Apostle wept, or why it was that the assembled universe burst forth in songs of joy and triumph when the Lion of the Tribe of Judah prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

Secondly; the various theories to which I allude are all inconsistent with the fact that the time of the vision is distinctly fixed by the complaint of the souls seen under the altar on the opening of the fifth seal, to a period of grievous persecution: a period too which shall be but a short time only before the last great effort of the enemy, in which the number of the martyrs shall be fulfilled, and which shall be immediately followed by the day of Christ.

And thirdly; I consider it a very serious and fatal objection to the symbolical and historical interpretations of this prophecy, that they are almost all compelled to explain away one of the clearest and most magnificent descriptions of the Day of Judgment which is to be found in the Bible, as if it predicted

only such events as the conversion of Constantine, the overthrow of Paganism, or the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies.

The commentators who have maintained these or such like interpretations, are compelled to assert, that in one or other of the events to which I have alluded, or, as some will tell us, in the overthrow of the French monarchy in the last century^c, has been

^c See what has been said on this subject, p. 71, and note ¹, *ibid*; where however I have inadvertently done injustice to Mr. Cunninghame in representing him as having interpreted the language in Rev. vi. 14-17, of the French revolution. He is of opinion indeed that the fulfilment of the sixth seal *began* in that event, and he supposes the political changes which took place in most European nations at that period to be figured by the earthquake, and falling of the stars from heaven, spoken of ver. 12, 13, but the rest of the prophecy he believes will extend "to that great and final revolution which is to agitate and convulse the nations of Christendom, before the second advent of our Lord with the clouds of heaven." Diss. on the Seals and Trumpets, p. 22 (Fourth Edit. 1843). It does not, however, seem quite clear that by this "final revolution" he means the Day of Judgment: the following words imply the contrary: "This revolution is predicted by the prophet Daniel under the imagery of the coming of the antient of Days, and

the sitting of the judgment: the slaying of the fourth beast, and the giving of his body to the burning flame. These events happen immediately before the coming of the Son of Man, with the clouds of heaven, to receive His glorious kingdom. The scene of this revolution is therefore to be sought for within the body of the fourth beast, or in those kingdoms which formed the western Roman Empire," p. 23. If so then the last great judgment cannot be intended, and we must understand the general words of the prophecy, "and *every* mountain and island," &c., "and the kings of *the earth*," &c., as meaning only the mountains and kings of Europe, a limitation clearly arbitrary, and contrary to the express words of the text.

Any theories of interpretation which require us to explain away such express predictions of the great Day of Judgment, or to limit in an arbitrary manner the universal words of holy Scripture, ought surely to be discountenanced by Christians as unlawful. In another place Mr. Cunninghame having men-

fulfilled the solemn and awful language, "and the heaven departed as a scroll, when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island was moved out of their places:" that in one of these, or in some similar event, was fulfilled the prediction, "and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood: and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." Surely you must perceive that on similar principles of interpretation it would be equally possible for the infidel or the sceptic to demonstrate that no literal Day of Judgment has ever been foretold in any part of holy Scripture; that the eternal punishments spoken of as in store for the ungodly, are but a figure, and the eternal happiness promised to the righteous is but a dream.

II. I proceed now to the consideration of the vision which stands between the sixth and seventh seals. This has by many been taken as a continua-

tioned "universal peace," finds it necessary to add in a note, "By universal peace, I mean universal as it respects the scene of the prophecy. There may at the time be wars in Asia or America, which countries are not within the limits of the Apocalyptic world," p. 27. It deserves however to be considered whether "the Apocalyptic world" be not a pure fiction of our modern commentators; certain it is that all our popular historical interpretations of the

Revelation require us to cast out, as wholly unworthy of any place in prophecy, not only the entire of the Greek and Oriental churches, but also America, and in short all the world except that continent to which these commentators themselves belong, and which is therefore, on account of its proximity, magnified into an undue prominence in all their theories. See Mr. Maitland's remarks on this subject, *Second Inquiry*, p. 120.

tion of the former. But if the sixth seal be a prediction, as it undoubtedly is, of the day of Judgment, then it is impossible that the next vision can be a continuation of it, unless we suppose it to predict events which are to take place after the great Day of the wrath of the Lamb. This, if I mistake not, has never been pretended, and we must therefore believe that the vision which stands between the sixth and seventh seals, is a prophecy supplementary to that contained in the first six seals, which, as we have seen, is itself an integral prediction, relating to a well-defined period, from our Lord's taking upon Him His Kingdom to the general judgment, and containing in brief outline what we shall find to be afterwards filled up in the visions which follow.

The immediate object of this supplementary prophecy appears to be to exhibit the nature and some of the circumstances of that persecution and martyrdom of the followers of Christ, which was briefly foretold, or rather alluded to, in the vision of the seals.

The souls under the altar, you will remember, when they cried for vengeance against their murderers, were told that they should rest yet "for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." This delay it is the object of the supplementary vision contained in the seventh chapter to explain.

Four angels were seen "holding," i. e. restraining (*κρατοῦντας*) "the four winds of the earth, that the

wind should not blow upon the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." And a fifth angel who was seen "ascending from the east," and who had "the seal of the living God," cried to the four angels of the winds, saying, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."

And here we may take notice of another point of agreement between the vision before us, and our Lord's prophecy on the Mount of Olives. Angels are here employed, preparatory to the outpouring of the predicted judgments, to secure the godly from being overwhelmed in those calamities with the unbelieving multitudes around them, not perhaps to protect them from suffering martyrdom, so much as to support them in martyrdom, and to fulfil to them, amid the wars, and famines, and pestilences of the period, that gracious promise, "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth in the noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee. For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways^d."

And this is also exactly in accordance with what our Lord has foretold of the period of His future coming,— "And He shall send *His angels* with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

^d Ps. xci. 5-11.

Accordingly, twelve times twelve thousand of all the tribes of Israel, are announced to the apostle as having been "sealed with the seal of God in their foreheads." Whether we are to take this number literally, or only as denoting a large and perfect number, I shall not discuss. It is more important to remark, that it is not from the Jews only that the elect shall then be gathered from the four winds of heaven; for in the next scene of the vision the apostle tells us that he beheld "a great multitude, whom no man could number, *of all nations and kindreds, and people and tongues*, who stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb."

Thus then was seen fulfilled the number of those, who, as the fifth seal announced, should be slain "for the word of God and for the testimony which they held;" for so was the vision of the palm-bearing multitude explained to the apostle by the elder who addressed him. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains

of waters : and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*.”

Such then are the circumstances of this supplemental vision. Let me now ask your attention to one or two general observations on the additional particulars which it reveals.

1. Two classes of the servants of God were exhibited to the Apostle. The hundred and forty and four thousand who are expressly said to have been chosen and sealed from the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, and the countless multitude, which no man could number, “ of all nations, and kingdoms, and people and tongues.”

Of the former we are not told that they had suffered martyrdom, nor are they represented in the prophecy as in heaven ; all that we read of them is, that they are sealed in their foreheads with the seal of the living God, and that they are chosen from the tribes of the children of Israel.

Of the others, however, it is said that they had come out of great tribulation, and that they had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb ; and we may infer that they were seen by the apostle at a period when their earthly pilgrimage was accomplished, since it is written of them, “ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.”

2. It is remarkable also that while the sealed of

* Rev. vii. 14-17.

Israel, are distinctly numbered, the multitude chosen from among the Gentiles are declared to be innumerable. For whether we take the number of the sealed as literally one hundred and forty-four thousand, or as representing only a large and perfect number, still it is finite, and seems to have been expressly revealed to the Apostle, who says, "I heard the number of them that were sealed," as if in marked opposition to the white robed myriads gathered from the Gentiles "WHICH NO MAN COULD NUMBER, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues."

It does not, however, follow, that in this great multitude, who shall wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, none but Gentiles shall be found: among them, we are told, shall be some of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and therefore we may infer, some of the Jewish people, and of the Jews' language. Of this, however, the text speaks nothing expressly, and therefore, although we may not presume to say that there shall be Jews amongst them, yet we have still less ground for asserting that there shall not^f.

We read of them, that they shall come "out of great tribulation:" or, perhaps, we might more ex-

^f De Sacy, on Rev. vii. 9-13, says, "*Ils étoient de toute nation, de toute tribu, de tout peuple, et de toute langue*, pour faire voir qu'ils venoient des Gentils, et non pas seulement des douze tribus d'Israel, comme ceux qu'on avoit comptés auparavant. Il est bien certain que le plus grand nombre des Mar-

tyrs devoit dans la suite venir des Gentils: c'est pour cela que S. Jean ne les reduit pas à un nombre certain et précis, comme il avoit fait des Juifs; ce qui n'empêche pas qu'en cet endroit il n'ait principalement en vûe les Juifs, qu'il dépeint dans ce chapitre et dans le suivant."

actly render the original words, “out of THE great tribulation:”—ἐκ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς μεγάλης—the same tribulation doubtless in which Antichrist shall attempt the utter extermination of the Christian name; the same great and fearful tribulation of which our Lord hath said: “then shall be great tribulation”—θλίψις μεγάλη, the very words here used by St. John—“then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no nor ever shall be.”

3. But it is also to be observed, that the twelve times twelve thousand of the Jewish tribes, who are sealed with the seal of God, are not spoken of as having come out of this tribulation: nor can we (as I have already said) with absolute certainty conclude that they had passed through death at all, at the period to which the prophecy refers. I would suggest, therefore, that they are not the only “servants of God” to be then gathered from the Jewish nation, but rather that they shall be a chosen company, to whom peculiar privileges are to be vouchsafed in the kingdom of Christ.

And first, they are not spoken of as having passed through death. They did not appear like the palm-bearing multitude in the heavenly assembly which was the great scene of these visions; their number only was there proclaimed, and it is evidently implied that they continued on earth; for the reason given by the angel for marking them with the seal of the living God is, that they might be preserved from those judgments which were coming *upon the*

earth—"Hurt not the earth," he says, "neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads." It is plain, therefore, that at the time foreshown in the vision, the hundred and forty-four thousand sealed were still upon earth, and had not as yet passed through death.

And they are again alluded to in another place in a manner which leads to the same conclusion. Upon the sounding of the fifth Trumpet, locusts are seen to come upon the earth, and are expressly commanded to "hurt not the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads^s," an injunction from which it seems to follow, that they who shall be sealed with that sacred seal shall, at the time intended, be also in the earth, and in danger, were it not for this supernatural restraint, of suffering from the judgments which are coming upon their fellows.

In a subsequent prophecy, it is true, the hundred and forty-four thousand are seen, as it would seem, in glory, and in the enjoyment of their reward; and therefore most probably at a period when they had risen from the dead, or at least undergone that "change," which must pass on all who are "alive and remain" at our Saviour's coming^h.

It is to this I would chiefly refer in support of

^s Rev. ix. 4.

^h 1 Cor. xv. 52. "The DEAD shall be raised incorruptible, and WE" [i. e. *we* which are alive and remain, 1 Thes. iv. 17.] "shall

be changed." See the remarks already made on this passage in a former course of Lectures, p. 196, sq.; and note ^s p. 198.

the opinion that the hundred and forty-four thousand are to be considered, not as comprehending all who at the second coming of the Lord shall be marked as His servants from among the tribes of Israel, but rather as a chosen company, gifted while on earth with peculiar grace and sanctity, and rewarded throughout eternity with a peculiar reward.

In this remarkable vision, the Lamb is seen "standing on Mount Sion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads¹." This event occurs after the revelation of Antichrist, and immediately before the proclamation "that the hour of God's judgment is come," and the "wine-press of His wrath" made ready. It coincides therefore with the chronological place which prophecy assigns to the coming of the Lord: and that it does in fact predict that event, is evident from the Lamb being seen, not in heaven, as in the other visions, but on earth, "standing on the Mount Sion."

Now we learn from other prophecies, first, that in the last days, Mount Sion, "the mountain of the Lord's house, shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it," "for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem²;" and secondly, that our Lord, at His coming, shall be attended, not only by His holy angels, but also by His saints. "For if we believe," says St. Paul, "that Jesus died and rose again, even so them

¹ Rev. xiv.

² Isa. ii. 1-4; Mic. iv. 1-4.

See Lacunza, *Coming of Messiah*, Part ii. Phenom. 10.

also which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him^k." "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied," as St. Jude tells us, "saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him^l."

It is therefore in accordance with these prophecies, that the sealed of Israel are represented as "standing upon Mount Sion," in attendance upon our Lord at His coming. But this is only a part, or consequence, of a still higher and peculiar privilege; for it is written of them^m, "these are they which follow the Lamb *whithersoever He goeth*."

Another of their peculiar privileges is thus expressed: "And they sang as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders; and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth."

Again it is said of them, and the language must be regarded as describing a still further privilege, whatever be its precise meaning: "These were redeemed from among men, being *the first fruits* (*ἀπαρχή*) unto God and to the Lamb."

And lastly, I would remark, in order to complete

^k 1 Thess. iv. 14.

^l Jude, 14. "Ecce venit Dominus in sanctis millibus suis."

Vulg. 'Εν ἀγίαις μυριάσιν. "With myriads of his saints."

^m Rev. xiv. 4.

the account that is given of this favoured company, that the high privileges to which they are admitted would seem to be the reward of their peculiar sanctity and faithfulness, for we read of them, "These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins;" and again, "and in their mouth was found no guile, *for they are without fault* before the throne of God."

I have not thought it necessary to adduce any arguments to prove, that the sealed of the tribes of Israel are members of the Jewish nation, as I have assumed them to be; because this, I conceive, is distinctly asserted in the prophecy. Yet, you are perhaps all aware, that this is by no means admitted by the modern popular commentators, who agree in scarcely anything respecting this part of the prophecy, except that Jews are not intended. Some of these expositors, for example, tell us, that the hundred and forty-four thousand are the Albigenses and Waldenses, preserved in the midst of Popish error from the prevailing corruptions of the Church: others see in them the Reformation of Religion in the sixteenth century: others conceive them to prefigure the converts to Christianity in the reign of the emperor Constantine: others look upon the prophecy as predicting the great revival of true religion in England during the present century. But if the prophecy does not in any degree apply to the Jews, notwithstanding the express mention it contains of the tribes of Israel, how, it may be asked, can we be certain that any prophecy in holy Scripture really relates to the Jewish nation? If the distinct mention of each tribe by name suffice not to

designate the nation of Israel,—if, notwithstanding that express enumeration, the event in which the prophecy shall be fulfilled, is one in which the tribes of Israel are in no way more especially concerned than the Gentile Church, I confess I cannot see how we are to be assured that any interpretation which has been or may be proposed, whatever coincidences it may exhibit, can be the true signification of the prophecy, unless there be vouchsafed to us a second revelation to assure us of the fact.

But in the interpretation which I have proposed to you,—and which is only the revival of the ancient interpretation, once universally received in the Christian Church^a,—we are not driven to any such ex-

^a That this prophecy was anciently understood literally of the Jews, is evident from the opinion (which is as old as Irenæus, lib. v. c. 30), that the tribe of Dan was omitted in the list of the sealed, because Antichrist will be born of that tribe.

Many early commentators, however, Primasius, Haymo, Ambrosiaster or Berengaudus, Bede, &c., interpret it mystically of the whole body of the faithful. The literal interpretation was revived again by Petrus Aureolus (A. D. 1345) the father of the historical expositions, who applies the prophecy to those who were converted to the faith in the times of Constantine, understanding by the hundred and forty-four thousand sealed the Jewish, and by the palm-bearing, innumerable multitude the Gentile converts.

De Lyra, however, at nearly the same period, understood by the tribes of Israel the figurative or spiritual Israel; and the same view has since been very generally taken by modern Protestant commentators. Mede considers the hundred and forty-four thousand sealed of Israel as a typical representation of the Church, preserved in the midst of persecution, and the palm-bearing multitude as an emblem of the same Church delivered from her enemies, and in glory (Works, p. 562, sq.); and Mr. Cunninghame, one of the latest writers of the same school, supposes that the sealing is now going on, and that the prophecy is receiving its accomplishment, in the “new activity and far more widely extended exertions in circulating the Sacred Scriptures,” which have been made

tremity; we are called upon only to adhere to the plain words of the sacred text; we presume not to add to or take from those words by any arbitrary or fanciful exposition of them; and when the text assures us that it speaks of those who shall be sealed and chosen from the tribes of the children of Israel, we believe it to foretell an event in which the Jewish nation is mainly concerned; when it tells us of a countless multitude, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, we believe it to speak of those who shall be gathered, if not exclusively, at least principally from the Gentiles, who, by faith and bap-

since the French Revolution (Diss. on the Seals and Trumpets, p. 29); and "the hundred and forty-four thousand mystic Israelites, who are the sealed, represent that eminently faithful portion of the Church of God, who are counted worthy of escaping the things which shall come to pass, and of standing before the Son of Man, being caught up into the air, with the saints of the first resurrection, to meet Him at His advent" (p. 333). In answer to the objection that the text expressly declares them to be Jews, he is content to reply (p. 360), "During this dispensation, the believers, both Jew and Gentile, who form the true Church, are the true Israel of God;" which seems very much like begging the question.

Bossuet, and his followers Calmet and De Sacy, admit that Jews are intended, but in-

terpret the prophecy of the early Church of Jewish converts at Jerusalem, which existed there under fifteen Jewish Bishops, from the destruction of the temple to the times of the emperor Adrian. Cornelius a Lapide, however, with some others (Andreas Cæsariensis, Pannonius, Ribera, Pererius), maintains the ancient interpretation: his words are: "verum cum, ut dixi initio capitis, hæc omnia spectent ad finem mundi et ad tempora Antichristi, hinc sequitur, hunc numerum 144 millium signatorum tantum esse eorum qui in fine mundi tum ante Antichristum, tum sub ipso, tum maxime post ipsum occisum, . . . ad Christum convertentur, et salvabuntur. Tunc enim omnis Israel salvus fiet, ait Apostolus, Rom. 11. prædicante eis Elia, uti prædixit Malach. c. 4."—Com. in loco.

tism, shall be made heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, and who, as the prophecy assures us, shall "come out of great tribulation, and shall wash their robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb."

I have exceeded too much the ordinary limits of a discourse like this to proceed much further for the present with the inquiry upon which I have entered. But let me just remark, before I conclude, that the literal interpretation given to the prophetic sealing of the twelve times twelve thousand from the tribes of Israel, is in strict accordance with the fact, revealed in many prophecies, that at the period referred to in the vision, the Jewish people shall be in existence as a nation, and that the majority of them will be still in their unbelief. In other words, that before the second coming of the Lord, the Jews shall be reestablished in possession of the land of promise, although their national conversion to Christianity shall be far from complete. I cannot now stop to prove to you that this is the true signification of the prophecies to which I allude^o; it must suffice to observe that it was so the ancient Fathers appear to have understood them, as must be evi-

^o See Lacunza, Part ii. Phœnom. 5. P. Lambert, Exposition des Predictions et des promesses faites à l'Eglise. tom. i. chap. vi. sq. Burgh's Lect. on the second Advent,—Lect. iv. See also on the subject of the prophecy in Revel. vii., Mr. Burgh's Lectures on the Revelation (4th Edition) Lect. xiii.,

which well deserves the attentive perusal of the reader who is interested in this subject. In this last place Mr. Burgh draws a parallel (as Cornelius a Lapide and others had done before him) between the sealing of the 144,000, and the prophecy in Ezek. viii., ix.

dent from the opinion so generally adopted by the early Christians, that Antichrist shall be received and followed by the Jews, as their true Messiah; and that under him they shall establish themselves in Judæa, and become his willing instruments for the subversion of the Christian faith,—the extinction of the Christian name^p.

III. I must now sum up in a very few words, the events that are foretold in the prophecy we have been considering.

The opening of the seven seals predicts the judgments which are to be the signs and accompaniments of our Saviour's coming: wars and rumours of wars, famines, pestilences, and the combined horrors of all these plagues together, the sword, and hunger, and death, and beasts of the earth.

These fearful judgments—for these, as our Lord has said, are but “the beginning of sorrows”—shall be

^p The ancient opinion that Antichrist will arise from the tribe of Dan, and that his principal followers will be Jews, necessarily implies the restoration of the Jews as a nation; see the authorities for this opinion in Malvenda, *De Antichristo*, lib. ii. c. 6, and c. 9, 10. The ancients also believed that Jerusalem will be the seat of Antichrist (Malvenda, lib. vi. c. 37), and that the Jews will follow him as the true Messiah (*ibid.* c. 39), also that he will restore the Mosaic law in opposition to the Gospel (*ibid.* lib. viii. c. 1), and that the Jews shall at length

be converted to the faith of Christ by the preaching of Elijah the prophet, comp. Mal. iv. 5, 6 (*ibid.* lib. xi.) All this clearly shows how literally the ancient Church understood the prophecies: they believed that the Jews as a nation would recover possession of the promised land in unbelief: that there they would rebuild the Temple, restore the Mosaic rites, and submit themselves to Antichrist: and that they should be at length converted to Christianity, after many judgments, and a renewal of miraculous interpositions.

followed by still more terrible calamities; namely, by a persecution of the Church, and a "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to that time, no, nor ever shall be." But a remnant of the Jewish nation shall be preserved, in the midst of these fatal visitations: and a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, shall pass triumphant out of that great tribulation, and shall wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

For the Jewish remnant also, as we learn from another vision of the Apocalypse, peculiar privileges are reserved. Privileges that may well raise our adoring wonder at the boundless Grace that has yet in store for that rebellious and stiff-necked nation, blessings and glories of such amazing magnitude. The Lamb Himself, inasmuch as He has taken upon Him our mortal nature, is of the tribe of Judah, of the root of David, of the race of Abraham; the twelve Apostles of the Lamb are also Hebrews, of the same highly favoured people and nation. Nor is this all: twelve times twelve thousand Jews, sealed with the seal of the living God, having the Father's Name written in their foreheads, and in whose mouths shall be found no guile, shall sing before the throne that new song, which none but themselves can learn,—and—O great and transcendent glory—shall stand upon Mount Sion with our Lord at His coming, and "SHALL FOLLOW THE LAMB WHITHERSOEVER HE GOETH."

LECTURE IV.

Quid autem terrores quas cernimus, nisi sequentis iræ præcones dixerimus ? Unde et considerare necesse est, quia ab illa tribulatione ultima tantum sunt istæ tribulationes dissimiles, quantum a potentia Judicis persona Præconis distat. Illum ergo diem, fratres carissimi, tota intentione cogitate, vitam corrigite, mores mutate, mala tentantia resistendo vincite, perpetrata autem fletibus punite. Adventum namque æterni Judicis tanto securiores quandoque videbitis, quanto nunc distractionem illius timendo prævenitis. S. Gregorii M. In Evangelia, Hom. i.

LECTURE IV.

REV. x. 5-7.

“And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets.”

I PROCEED now to consider the new series of visions which were exhibited to St. John, on the opening of the seventh seal. In them, as I hope to convince you, the same events, foretold in the prophecies which last engaged us, are again represented, but under different points of view, and with the addition of several new and most important particulars^a.

^a A great number, perhaps a majority of commentators, ancient and modern, admit the principle, that the trumpets are a recapitulation of the seals. Bede says (in cap. viii. 1). “Huc usque de apertione libri clausi, et sex sigillorum. Nunc vero recapitulat ab origine eadem

aliter dicturus.” And Mr. Cunningham; “Now seeing that the first six seals contain an epitome of the state of the Church, down to that final consummation of all things on this earth, when *the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever.*

When the Lamb had opened the seventh seal, "there was silence in heaven, about the space of half an hour." This may perhaps be understood as intimating the great importance and awful character of the revelations that were about to follow^b. And,

Dan. vii. 18, and that the trumpets cannot extend beyond this final consummation, it follows that the seventh seal, and seven trumpets must relate to the events which are contemporaneous with the first six seals, or at least with the last part of them." Dissert. on the Seals and Trumpets, pp. 44, 45 (4th Edit.) See also what has been said on this subject in the last Lecture, pp. 72-74, and the quotation from Victorinus, p. 29, note ^a.

Vitringa supposes the seventh seal to comprehend nothing but the half hour's silence in heaven (ch. viii.) and the trumpets he takes to be a new vision, predicting the history of the Roman empire, or the external state of the Church, as the former visions did the internal fate of Christianity.—Anacrisis Apoc. i. c. 8.

^b The silence in heaven has been variously interpreted. Several ancient commentators (Primasius and Victorinus for example) suppose it to signify the *eternal* rest of the blessed. Others (as Haymo and Ansbertus) understand it to intimate the *short* time of peace and rest which the servants of God are allowed to enjoy in this world. Ambrosiaster or Berengaudus interprets it of the peace which

prevailed at the birth of Christ. Aureolus and De Lyra represent it as a prediction of the decree of Julian the Apostate, who imposed *silence* on Christians, "tam in ecclesia, quam in militia, academia, et scholis." Bede explains it of the rest of the Church after the destruction of Antichrist: "Post interitum Antichristi, requies aliquantula futura creditur in Ecclesia, de qua Daniel *Beatus qui expectat*," &c. Comm. in loc.

Rupertus says that this silence in heaven signifies "quod nullus in die iudicii contra Christum iudicantem hiscere audebit;" and others have devised interpretations equally vague and far-fetched, of which the above may be taken as a sufficient sample.

Of the modern interpretations a very few specimens must suffice: Mr. King (Morsels of Criticism, vol. ii. p. 79), says: "The *silence* described as taking place for *half an hour*, on opening the *seventh seal*, most clearly denotes that there was to be an interval of peace and quiet, without any remarkable events, for a certain space of time denoted by the prophetic *half hour*, before the calamities to be described under the Trumpets could have their first commencement:" and he afterwards

accordingly, we find that the angels of highest dignity, "THE seven angels (*οἱ ἑπτά*) which stood before God," were seen to come forward, and "to them were given seven trumpets."

tells us that this "prophetical half hour" was a period of "twenty-five years precisely, from 312 to 337, and *then* began the storm of hail," p. 80. Hammond, Sir Isaac Newton, Lowman, and others, take the silence to be merely an allusion to the temple service, preparatory to the sacerdotal act of the angel mentioned ver. 3. Vitringa opposes this interpretation, and makes the half hour's silence to denote a *long* state of peace which the Church was to enjoy during the period predicted by the seventh seal: "Id vero quid fuerit præterpacatum, florentem, tranquillum, et prosperum statum Ecclesiæ, per longum satis tempus duraturum, cujus Joannes in Viso ultimo superioris sigilli fecerat mentionem?" Anacr. Apoc. p. 323. Mr. Habershon appears to follow the same view. Exp. of the Revel. p. 113.

Mr. Burgh says, "This silence we may perceive from the verses following to be for the hearing of prayer at that time offered." Lect. on the Apoc. p. 183 (4th Edit.); and Archdeacon Woodhouse (with whom Mr. Cunningham agrees), says, "It seems to be exhibited for the purpose of denoting a change in the mode, or in the subject of the prophecy; to disunite the succeeding scene from

that which had gone before; to unfold a new chain of prediction," p. 200. Cunningham, p. 44. Bishop Newton seems to combine two or three of the foregoing interpretations; he says: "this *silence of half an hour* is a sign that the peace of the Church would continue but for a short season. It is an interval and pause, as it were, between the foregoing and the succeeding visions. It is a mark of solemnity, to procure attention, and to prepare the mind for great and signal events, and not without an allusion to a ceremony among the Jews," viz. the silence kept by the people while the priest went into the temple to burn incense (Luke, i. 10). Dissert. in loco.

^e That there are seven principal archangels who stand in the presence of God, was the ancient belief of the Jewish as well as of the Christian Church. Thus the Targum, published under the name of Jonathan Ben Uzziel, on Gen. xi. 7, paraphrases the words "Let us go down, and let us confound their language," &c., thus,

אמר "לשבעין מלאכיא דקיימין קימי
איתין כדון ונחית.

"The Lord said to the seven angels which stand before Him, come now, and let us go down and confound," &c. Also in the Book of Tobit (xii. 15), the an-

But before these angels proceed to sound the trumpets, two significant actions are exhibited to the apostle, as introductory to the approaching revelations.

An eighth angel "came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne." "And," the apostle adds, "the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand^d." This was the first significant action introductory to the sounding of the trumpets.

Secondly: the same angel, after having thus offered up the prayers of all saints, filled the censer in which he had made the offering with fire from the altar, and "cast it into the earth, and there were

gel discovering himself to Tobit and his son, says: "I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One." And in canonical Scripture the same doctrine seems taken for granted in the passage before us, and also in Luke, i. 19, where the angel says to Zacharias: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God;" compare also Dan. x. 3. In the Apocalypse there are other allusions to the seven archangels. In ch. i. 4, "the seven spirits which are before the throne" are spoken of; and

in ch. v. 6, the seven eyes of the Lamb are explained to mean "the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth," which (compared with Heb. i. 14) seems plainly to denote angels. Comp. Zech. iv. 10, where the seven lamps of the golden candlestick are explained to signify "the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth." In Rev. xv. 1, the seven angels are again introduced. See Mede's Sermon on Zech. iv. 10. Book. I. Disc. 10. Works, p. 40. See also his letter to Dr. Twisse, Book IV. Epist. 61, p. 883.

^d Rev. viii. 3, 4.

voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."

From these two actions we are led to infer, that the judgments foretold in this prophecy shall be the consequence in some remarkable manner of the prayers of all saints, crying to God to accomplish speedily the number of His elect, and to hasten His kingdom^e. At this period, therefore, the prayers which the universal Church has offered up from age to age for the coming of Christ's kingdom, "the prayers of *all* saints," which God has for so long a time seemingly delayed to answer, shall at length be heard; and the fire of the heavenly altar, which is before the throne of the Most High, shall be cast down upon the earth, bringing wrath and destruction upon the heads of all who have persecuted His people, or obeyed not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is also in accordance with what was revealed in the last vision, where, you will remember, at the opening of the fifth seal, the souls under the altar were heard to cry for vengeance on their persecutors, and were told to wait yet for a little season until the number of their brethren that should be killed as they were should be fulfilled. Hence therefore, we may infer that the vision of the trum-

^e Mr. Burgh says, "We gather from this, that, at the opening of the seventh seal, there shall be a number of the Lord's people peculiarly engaged in prayer, and particularly, I would conclude, the remnant

sealed in the last chapter." Lect. on the Revel. p. 183 (4th edit.). Why Mr. Burgh concludes this he does not say. The text speaks of the prayers offered up by the angel, as "the prayers of *all* saints."

pets was intended to predict this promised vengeance, or at least the commencement of it; including also the circumstances of the last persecution of the Church, and the fulfilment of that great consummation, for which the prayers of all saints have been poured forth in all ages—the coming of the Day of God; the final victory, in which “the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever^f.”

After this introduction, “the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.” And here it may be remarked, that the judgments foretold in the trumpets divide themselves into two classes: the first four trumpets denounce calamities upon inanimate things, or upon the inferior creation: the remaining three foretell the judgments with which mankind will be more directly visited.

Upon the sounding of the first four trumpets, “hail and fire mingled with blood” were seen to fall *upon the earth*, “and the third part of trees was burned up, and all green grass was burnt up.” A great mountain burning with fire was cast *into the sea*, “and the third part of the sea became blood, and the third part of all the living creatures which were in the sea died.” A star, burning like a lamp, fell upon the third part of the *rivers and fountains of waters*, and they became wormwood, “and many men died of the waters because they were bitter.” And lastly, *the*

^f Rev. xi. 15, comp. 2 Pet. iii. 12, 13.

heavenly bodies became also partakers of these judgments: "the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars, so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise^g."

The system adopted in all the modern popular expositions of the Apocalypse renders it necessary for their authors to assume that the earth, the sea, the rivers, the sun, the moon, the stars, the day, and the night, in this prediction, are to be taken *as symbols*^h; denoting either the spiritual warfare and corruptions of the Christian Churchⁱ; or, as very many of these expositors would persuade us, the overthrow of the Roman empire by the Goths and Vandals in the fourth and fifth centuries^k.

No proof, however, is even attempted to be given that the language is symbolical^l: the sacred text itself

^g Rev. viii. 6-12.

^h "All interpreters of note," says Mr. Cunningham, "agree that this universe" [the universe, namely, described in the prophecy as the object of these judgments] "is a symbolical one; but there is much difference of opinion with regard to the signification of the symbols." Diss. on the Seals and Trumpets, p. 49.

ⁱ Archdeacon Woodhouse, De Lyra, and many other commentators interpret these judgments of the heresies.

^k This last is the opinion of Mede, Fleming, Sir Isaac New-

ton, Bishop Newton, Whiston, Daubuz, Lowman, Faber, Frere, Cunningham, Keith, Habershon, and many others.

^l Mr. Habershon says (on the Revel., p. 124), "It must not be forgotten that these four distinct natural parts of the empire" [land, sea, rivers, and heavenly bodies, although how these last came to be natural parts of *the empire* he has not explained] "are placed here as *symbols*. It would be a violation of every principle of consistency to suppose them otherwise: as well as an involution of the whole subject in a laby-

contains no intimation that such is the case, much less does it afford any clue to the interpretation of the symbols, and consequently if the language be symbolical, all is left to conjecture and uncertainty.

In the absence, therefore, of all evidence of the contrary, we are warranted in assuming that the judgments predicted are to be understood literally, unless there should appear to be anything inconsis-

rinth of difficulties and ludicrousness." This, however, is mere assertion, not argument. It may be inconsistent and ludicrous in a commentator who had already made symbols of every other judgment described in the Apocalypse, to interpret the prediction before us literally. But this is no reason why there should be any real difficulty in the literal interpretation. There is nothing more difficult or ludicrous in the literal sense of this passage than there was in the destruction of Sodom, or in the plagues of Egypt. It is, however, surprising, to hear a commentator gravely propose the symbolical interpretation as a mode of escaping inconsistency and a labyrinth of difficulties; in the face of the acknowledged fact (see note ^h) that there are hardly two advocates of that system who interpret the supposed symbols in the same way. Mr. Habershon himself, for example, tells us that *the land* denotes persons in a state of peace and quietness; *the sea* persons in a

state of unsettled anarchy and confusion; *rivers* the support and source of this anarchy; and *the heavenly luminaries* kings, princes, and courtiers. Bishop Newton takes the earth, the sea, the rivers, all together to denote the Roman empire generally; the heavenly bodies, to denote the senate or government of the empire. Archdeacon Woodhouse interprets the same symbols of the spiritual affairs of the Christian religion; and is refuted by Mr. Cunninghame, who thinks that the earth, the sea, the rivers, are not to be separately interpreted "as applicable to distinct parts of the Roman empire," but that they are severally mentioned to denote "the universality of the desolation of the empire" (p. 57, 58). But if the earth, sea, &c., denote the Roman empire, its desolation ought not to have been universal, for it is *the third part* only of the earth, sea, rivers, &c., that is represented in the prophecy as smitten. So much for the "consistency" of this class of expositions.

tent with reason or religion in so understanding them. This however can scarcely be said, when it is admitted that the plagues of Egypt, which all commentators agree to interpret literally, were judgments remarkably similar in their character; and when it is remembered that our Lord has predicted a visitation of the same kind as one of the signs of His future coming: "and there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken^m."

Why then should we hesitate to believe that the judgments foretold on the sounding of the first four trumpets are equally literal? and that they describe a revival of some of those awful and miraculous visitations with which the sins of men were punished in the early ages of the world? namely, Hail and fire from heaven, mingled with blood, which will burn up and destroy the trees and grass of the field; fire falling into the sea; the sea, like the rivers of Egypt, converted into blood; fish destroyed, and ships overwhelmed; rivers and fountains made bitter and poisonous: the heavenly bodies darkened, and perhaps annihilated, or their lights extinguishedⁿ.

^m S. Luke, xxi. 25, 26.

ⁿ The following additional argument, which is adduced by

Mr. Burgh in favour of the literal interpretation, seems worthy of attention. Having quoted ch.

And yet in the midst of all these fearful judgments God will remember mercy; a third part only of the earth, and sea, and rivers, a third part only of the sun, and moon, and stars, shall be thus smitten; for otherwise, if such a visitation were universal, no flesh could be saved.

And these are the judgments upon inanimate things, and upon the inferior part of creation, which shall be employed to usher in "the great tribulation" of the latter times.

The three remaining trumpets announce calamities immediately or directly coming upon man: and to these I desire more particularly to call your attention, as belonging especially to the subject of this course of Lectures. They are prefaced by an angel^o, who was seen by the apostle, "flying through the midst of heaven, and saying with a loud voice, Woe, Woe, Woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the three angels which are yet to sound^p." And we are still further awakened to the momentous character of the events predicted, by similar proclamations after the first and second

viii.13, "woe to the *inhabitants* of the earth," &c., he says: "where I would remark as a strong argument in favour of taking the first four trumpets literally, that if, as expositors contend, *the trees, grass, &c.*, figuratively mean *persons*, then these trumpets affect the inhabitants of the earth as well as the three last: whereas in the prophecy the distinction is most clearly

marked between the objects affected; first the *earth*, and afterwards the *inhabitants* of the earth."—Lectures on the Revel. p. 188 (4th Edit.)

^o Or *an eagle*, ἐν ἁετῷ, *unius aquilæ*, as the Lat. Vulg., with a majority of the ancient versions and MS. authorities, reads here.

^p Chap. viii. 13.

of these trumpets, and by the declaration, which I have quoted as the text of this discourse, that "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the Prophets^a."

I proceed, therefore, now to examine the revelations made under these "woe trumpets," as commentators have found it convenient to term them.

I. Upon the sounding of the fifth angel, who held the first woe trumpet, "a star" was seen to fall from heaven.

This star is manifestly a person, and not a natural star, for the actions of a person are ascribed to him: "to him was given the key of the bottomless pit; and he opened the bottomless pit: and there arose a smoke out of the pit as the smoke of a great furnace^r." When we come to the consideration of the prophecy contained in the twelfth chapter, we shall see reason, I think, to conclude that Satan himself is intended: and that he is here represented at the period (there also predicted), when by the victory of St. Michael and his angels, "the great Dragon called the Devil and Satan," shall be cast out of heaven into the earth.

At present it must suffice to remark that this interpretation is in accordance with the language of the Old Testament, where angels are spoken of as stars^s,

^a Chap. x. 7.

^r Rev. ix. 1, 2.

^s See Job, xxxviii. 7; and

comp. Is. xiv. 12-14, and Dan. viii. 10.

and of our Lord, who has said, foreshadowing perhaps the very period to which this prophecy relates, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven¹." I may add, that it is a further remarkable coincidence between this prophecy and that contained in the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse, that both are connected with a denunciation of woe to the inhabitants of the earth. I have already quoted the words of the angel who proclaimed woe preparatory to the sounding of the fifth trumpet, and the fall of the star from heaven: parallel to this, in the twelfth chapter, we find the casting out of Satan followed by the declaration: "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time²."

But to proceed with the particulars of the prophecy; the star which fell from heaven, having opened the bottomless pit, locusts were seen to issue from the smoke that arose out of it, and to spread themselves over the earth.

The power of these locusts, its nature, intensity, and limits, are then particularly described; their shapes, hair, teeth, and armour are also noted, and we are told further, that "they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon."

Upon this prediction I shall now make some general remarks:

¹ Luke, x. 18.

² Rev. xii. 12.

In the first place it must I think be obvious to every reader that something more than a plague of natural locusts is here intended. This I infer from the description given of them, which can hardly be applied to a swarm of mere insects^v. And in this I believe the great majority of commentators are agreed^w.

Secondly, I would observe that the locusts are expressly said to have issued "out of the smoke of the bottomless pit," and to have come "upon the earth." From which it may be inferred that they will be in their nature not of the earth; that they will be in fact demons or infernal beings, let loose

^v Rev. ix. 7. "And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men," &c.

^w P. Lessius, *De Perfect. Divinis*, lib. xiii. c. 18, (ap. Cornel. a Lapide in loc.), supposes mere locusts to be intended, but he admits that they will be "pe-regrinas et monstrosas." Mr. Burgh also, in the 4th Edit. of his *Lectures on the Rev.* adopts the same opinion, arguing chiefly from the supposed, but I think untenable, identity of this prophecy with Joel, i. ii. iii., where literal locusts are plainly spoken of. He admits that in Joel "the vegetation is exclusively affected," and that in Revelation, vegetation is expressly *excepted* from being affected by the ravages of the locusts,

and yet he draws this conclusion: "but that literal locusts are intended in both instances, appears to me unquestionable." p. 196. How literal locusts can have "faces like the faces of men," Mr. Burgh does not explain.

Mr. Govett follows Mr. Burgh in supposing this prophecy to be identical with that in Joel, i. ii. iii., and nevertheless concludes, "The army which issues from the bottomless pit is, we may infer, an army of demons. For that they are not natural locusts, is provable by many inferences which may be deduced from the passages quoted, especially by the fact that they had a king over them, *the angel of the bottomless pit*." Exp. of the Apoc. p. 124. But if so, this prophecy cannot be identical with that of Joel, for there natural locusts are confessedly described.

upon the earth by the opening of the bottomless pit: and it is remarkable that power is said to be given unto them, "as the scorpions *of the earth* have power," again perhaps implying that the locusts are not of the earth.

This view of the nature of the locusts is confirmed by the fact that their king is expressly stated in the prophecy to be "*the angel* of the bottomless pit;" and if an angel, certainly a fallen angel or demon, else how could he have come from the pit, the prison and abode of the fallen angels? We may therefore conclude that his followers, who issue with him from the same chains of darkness, are likewise of the same nature^{*}.

^{*} That the locusts in this prophecy denote evil spirits, who shall be let loose in vast multitudes upon the earth at the period predicted, is the opinion of Cornelius a Lapide, who, after enumerating other interpretations, says: "Dico ergo planissimus et aptissimus sensus est ut hæc proprie sicut sonant accipias. Locustæ ergo hæ erunt demones, qui speciem et formam locustarum induent; sed novam et monstrosam, utpote ex variis animalibus, puta leone, scorpione, equo et homine, commixtam et consarcinatam." The following are the principal arguments by which he supports this opinion. 1. "Ex refutatione aliarum [sententiarum]." 2. "quia prodeunt ex puteo abyssi, id est, inferni; ergo sunt

infernales, ergo dæmones." 3. "Quia in fine mundi plagæ erunt novæ, insolitæ, et inauditæ." 4. "Rex harum locustarum est dæmon dictus Abaddon, vers. 11. hunc enim dæmonem esse omnes consentiunt; ergo et subditi ejus, puta locustæ hæ, erunt pariter dæmones." His other arguments are unworthy of notice. Among the ancients, the same view was taken by Andreas, Bishop of Cæsarea (A. D. 500), who gives it as the opinion of older commentators: "Ego una cum illis [antiquioribus scil.] fateor stellam, de qua hic sermo, divinum esse angelum. Hunc autem malignos dæmones quos Christus homo factus ad abyssum ablegaverat inde rursum ad tempus, secundum sapientem Dei permissionem, educturum,

But whether this be so or not, whether the prophecy describes a period in which evil spirits will again be permitted to come forth upon the earth, and to afflict mankind with various plagues, or whether it describes only an army of men, whose actions shall be such as to produce the effect described, it cannot be doubted, without departing from the express words of the Scripture, that if no more than human beings are intended, they will at least be in a peculiar manner under the influence of Satan, or at all events under the command of "the angel of the bottomless pit," whose name is Apollyon and Abaddon.

Thirdly, the nature of the limits imposed upon the locusts, as to their power of doing mischief, supplies another argument in favour of this conclusion. "It was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree," an injunction which we can scarcely conceive possible to be obeyed either by natural locusts, or by an army of men, without some miraculous restraint⁷; and this seems further confirmed by

quo ante seculi consummationem, quæ ipsorum sunt propria molientes, suppliciis demum nunquam finem habituris mancipentur." Comm. in loc. (ap. Bibl. PP. Paris. 1653. tom. 1, col. 1561).

It may be added that the opinion that evil spirits are intended is in conformity with other prophecies, where we read that the apostasy of the latter

times shall be brought about by "seducing spirits" and the "teaching or doctrines of devils:" and that the coming of the man of sin shall be "after the working of Satan." See what has already been said on these prophecies in Discourses on the Proph. relating to Antichrist, Lect. V. p. 226, sq. Lect. VI. p. 295, sq.

⁷ It is curious to observe how

the additional restriction, that they should not *kill*, but only *torment* their victims. It is added: "their

this difficulty has been met by the historical commentators, who interpret this prophecy of the Saracens. Mr. Habershon takes it figuratively. It intimates (he says) "that by the grass of the earth, the green things, and the trees, those are to be understood who *have* the mark of God in their foreheads, and that they should be preserved." (Exp. of the Rev. p. 161). Mr. Lowman, Bishop Newton, Mr. Faber, and Mr. Cunningham interpret it literally: "History informs us" (says the latter, Dissert. p. 70), "that the following formed a part of the instructions given to the army of Saracens which invaded Syria in the reign of Abubeker, the successor of Mahommed: 'Destroy no palm-trees, nor burn any fields of corn; cut down no fruit trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat.'" And for this he refers to "Gibbon, chap. li." Mr. Faber quotes the same passage, but prudently gives no authority for it (Sacred Calendar, vol. ii. p. 400). Upon reference to Gibbon, however, we find that the Caliph continued his instructions, immediately after the words above quoted, thus: "when you make any covenant or article, stand to it, and be as good as your word. As you go on, you will find some religious persons who live retired in monasteries, and pro-

pose to themselves to serve God that way; let them alone, and neither kill them nor destroy their monasteries: and you will find another sort of people, that belong to the synagogue of Satan, who have shaven crowns: be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter till they either turn Mahometans or pay tribute." Decline and Fall, vol. ix. p. 378 (Milman's Edit).

If, therefore, this injunction of the Caliph Abubeker be the fulfilment of the prophecy, we ought surely to take the whole of it, and not select only the sentence that may seem to suit a theory. No doubt this great inconvenience will follow, on a comparison of the whole with the prophecy, that the lay monks are the men who have the seal of God on their foreheads, and the tonsured monks or priests the men especially who have not; but commentators who appeal to "history" ought to be prepared to encounter all the consequences. Yet it seems that the distinguished writers above named could think of no better mode of escaping this difficulty than that of suppressing a portion of the document on which they relied.

Mr. Keith, however, is more ingenious. He quotes the whole of the caliph's instructions; and says, that although the Saracens did not obey the injunc-

torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek

tion, yet "it was so *commanded* them." Signs of the Times, vol. i. p. 314 (7th Edit.) But this author forgets that the prophecy distinctly states that the command to the locusts was *not to kill*; whereas the caliph's orders were express to *cleave the skulls* of all with shaven heads. Besides what sad trifling it is to say that such a prophecy was sufficiently accomplished by a command having been given which was not obeyed.

"*Homogeneity*" is a principle in the hands of our symbolical commentators, which is by no means easily understood. Here it is worthy of remark that all the commentators who quote the words of the Caliph Abubeker as fulfilling this prophecy agree in admitting that "trees" mean *trees*, and "grass," *grass*, in the midst of a prediction where every thing else is symbolical.

The next clause, asserting that the locusts were *not to kill* but only *to torment*, has occasioned great embarrassment to commentators: Bishop Newton thus deals with it: "They might *kill* them as individuals, but still they should not *kill* them as a political body, as a state or empire. They might greatly harass and *torment* both the Greek and Latin Churches, but they should not utterly extinguish them." Diss. in loc. According to this interpretation,

therefore, by all the laws of homogeneity, the remaining words, ver. 9, "men shall seek death, &c.," must mean that the Greek and Latin Churches *desired* extinction, and *eagerly sought* for it at the hand of the Saracens: a fact which historians have omitted to record, nor has the Bishop given any explanation of it: and the same remarkable silence as to the fulfilment of this part of the prediction is observed by Mr. Lowman, Mr. Faber, Mr. Cunningham, and Mr. Habershon.

But Mr. Keith has devised a solution of this difficulty which deserves to be mentioned as a proof of the extraordinary shifts to which this class of commentators are compelled to have recourse. He supposes "the men" who shall "seek death," to be, not those tormented by the locusts, but the locusts themselves; and in their seeking death, and death fleeing from them, he discovers the Mahometan doctrine of predestination! "Men in those days," he says, "*sought death*, in the faith that death could not thereby find them a moment sooner, and that the battle field was the place by which paradise was entered; but *they found it not*, whose virtue lay in the slaughter of their enemies, and whose foes could not meet them in a dauntless spirit like their own. *They DESIRED* death, in whose

death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them^a." From which we may perhaps infer that they shall have power to inflict a fearful and agonizing, although not fatal disease^a.

It is clear, therefore, that if we suppose the locusts of the prophecy to signify either natural locusts, or a human army, we must also believe them to be endowed with powers very different from ordinary locusts, or an ordinary army; we must in short assume them to be *under the influence* of evil spirits; and if so, the question will then be whether the disease and torment with which men shall be visited at the period foretold in the prophecy are to be the immediate work of evil spirits, or of natural locusts, or of men who shall be under the influence of evil spirits.

And again, their power of hurting, thus confined to men, and to the infliction of disease, and not of death, is further limited to "those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads."

fancy it was enhanced with all the pleasures that they loved; but death fled from them for whom it had no terror, and against whom none could then stand on equal terms for a moment. Their spirits were on edge, like the swords of Damascus, and fearless of death, and estimating their virtue by the numbers of slaughtered enemies, *death fled from them.*"

Signs of the Times, vol. i. p. 318. Alas that Christian men, believing the inspiration of the Bible, will permit themselves thus to trifle with the word of God.

^z Rev. ix. 4-6. Griesbach adopts the reading βαρυστοι, instead of βαρυστοί; the Lat. Vulg. is "sed ut cruciarent."

^a Comp. Job, i. 12, ii. 6.

To suppose the locusts, therefore, to prefigure an army of evil spirits, whether employing the instrumentality of other beings or not, is evidently more consistent with the nature of the restraints described in the prophecy, implying, as they seem to do, a power in the locusts of distinguishing the sealed of God from the unsealed, of tormenting without killing, and of overspreading the country which is to be the scene of their ravages, without injury to the trees, and crops; all which are difficult to conceive possible in the case of an army composed of men, but present no difficulty if we suppose the prophecy to predict an invasion of evil spirits.

It is to be remarked also that the locusts are further restricted *in time*: "their power was to hurt men five months." This circumstance has occasioned great embarrassment to the historical interpreters^b; but is attended with no difficulty if we

^b Bishop Newton says: "One difficulty, and *the greatest of all*, remains yet to be explained; and that is the period of *five months* assigned to these locusts, which being twice mentioned, merits the more particular consideration." And he then goes on to say that this period being mentioned twice, may legitimately be doubled, and therefore taken for *ten* months, i. e. (counting a day for a year), three hundred years. However, as if conscious that this interpretation was not very likely to carry conviction with it, he suggests that perhaps the meaning

may be five (literal) months *at a time*; and then proceeds to show that the Saracens made their excursions "in the five summer months," and retreated again in the winter.

But although Bishop Newton considered this *the greatest difficulty of all*, Mr. Faber was of a different opinion; "Nothing remains" (he says), "but *the easy task* of settling the chronology of the five prophetic months, or the hundred and fifty natural days;" and accordingly he boldly asserts what Daubuz had before suggested, that these supposed one hundred

take it literally, and suppose it to relate to a period yet to come; the period of which our Lord Himself has said, in equivalent but more general terms: "and except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened^c." Their power shall be, not to kill, but only "to torment men five months;" words which may be understood as a prediction, either that the disease or torment to be so inflicted shall continue, in the case of each individual, but five months, or else that five months shall be the entire duration of this judgment.

And lastly, as it is expressly said that the woe here predicted, whatever may be its precise nature, shall

and fifty "natural days" began A. D. 612, and ended A. D. 762.

Mr. Cunninghame follows Mr. Faber, but without any attempt at proof. Mr. Habershon also assumes the same chronological period to be marked out, but adds, "it is not intended here to express the entire continuance of the kingdom or power of the Saracens, neither in its extent nor duration, and therefore it is not necessary, for the elucidation of this prophecy, to trouble ourselves with such inquiries." (p. 165-6). Mr. Keith (*Signs of the Times*, vol. i. p. 322) has found it more convenient to take up Bishop Newton's hint, that "the *double* period of five months amounts, in the usual prophetic phraseology designative of time, to three hundred years, — 'each

day for a year,' "—and accordingly dates the power of the locusts, A. D. 636, to A. D. 936.

Mede supposes the "five months" to denote the period from A. D. 830 to 980, but in the support of this hypothesis, as Daubuz shows, "he hath run himself into great absurdities." (Daubuz, p. 412).

Vitringa, who interprets the prophecy not of the Saracens but of the Goths, maintains that the five months are easily explained, whether we suppose them to signify a short period, or five definite periods (whether years or any other periods), or one hundred and fifty years, according to the theory of taking a day for a year. *Anacr. Apoc.* p. 394.

^c Matt. xxiv. 22.

only affect those men who have not the seal of God on their foreheads, it must follow that this plague will not injure the sealed remnant, or one hundred and forty-four thousand of the tribes of Israel, but only the rest of the nation, including also, perhaps, the Gentiles, although of them there is no express mention made in the prophecy.

I would conclude, therefore, from this vision, that after the restoration of the Jewish people to the land of Canaan, and the re-establishment there of their national polity^d, Satan will be permitted to raise up against them, from the darkness of the bottomless pit, a formidable persecution under the agency of evil spirits. Whether these infernal agents shall appear in a bodily form resembling locusts, according to the literal description given of them, or whether they shall be permitted to employ the instrumentality of natural locusts or of men, I do not venture to decide; but this is certain, that they shall have no power to destroy vegetation, but only to inflict on men a torment, which is described as similar to "the torment of a scorpion when it striketh a man," but which nevertheless shall not be mortal, and shall be of a limited duration. And in the midst of these judgments, the sealed of the children of Israel shall be protected from the evils which shall fall upon all around them; evils of such magnitude, that "in those days shall men seek death and shall

^d According to ancient opinion the temple will be rebuilt and the Mosaic religion and polity restored by Antichrist. See Malvenda de Antichristo, lib. viii. c. 1.

not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them^c."

II. I proceed now to the consideration of the second woe trumpet, which was formally announced by the proclamation: "One woe is past, and behold there come two woes hereafter." From this we may infer, not only the importance and formidable character of the prophecies which are to follow, but also perhaps, that the events in which they shall be fulfilled, will be, not contemporaneous, but consecu-

^c Ch. ix. 6. The various interpretations of the locusts in this prophecy may perhaps be reduced to four general classes: viz.:

1. The ancient opinion, that they are evil spirits: and their appearance still future.

2. The mediæval, or controversial opinion, that they denote heretics. This is the opinion of Bede, Haymo, Berengaudus, &c., each writer applying the prophecy to the heretics of his own day, or those with whom he was immediately in controversy. Under this head may be classed Romanists (as Bellarmin and others) who see in the locusts only Luther and the Protestants: as well as Protestants (e. g. Ussher, Bochart, Forbes, Pareus, &c.), who interpret the prophecy of the Pope, the monks, the Inquisition, and the great machinery of Popery.

3. The historical interpretations. These were begun by Aureolus, De Lyra, and their followers, who apply the prophecy to the Vandals, A. D.

441-536, and have since been adopted by subsequent writers, some of whom (as Hammond, Rosenmüller, Ewald, &c.) have had recourse to earlier times, and interpret the locusts of the Roman wars in Judea, ending in the destruction of Jerusalem. But the greater part of modern commentators, since the time of Joseph Mede, suppose this prophecy to have been fulfilled in the victories or the religion of Mahomet and his followers; although Vitranga rejects this theory, and returns to the more ancient application of it to the Goths and Vandals, by whom the Roman empire was destroyed in the fifth and sixth centuries.

4. The opinion of the Jesuit Lessius, and Mr. Burgh, that "literal locusts," although of "supernatural origin" (Burgh, p. 192) are intended—"veræ locustæ," as Lessius expresses it, "licet peregrinæ et monstrosæ." This opinion necessarily supposes the prophecy to be as yet unfulfilled.

tive^f: when the first woe is past, and not till then, we are to look for the fulfilment of the remainder of the prediction.

The vision exhibited to the apostle on the sounding of the sixth or second woe trumpet, was an army of horsemen, whose numbers were revealed as "two hundred thousand thousand;" and whose appearance and power are described in the following words: "And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone^g."

The locusts of the foregoing vision were prohibited from *killing*, and could only *torment* their victims; but the army of horsemen, now sent forth, were not so restricted: "by these three" (we are

^f Many of our modern historical commentators interpret this announcement as indicating that a long interval shall elapse between the termination of the first woe, and the commencement of the second. Bishop Newton says: "This is added not only to distinguish the woes, but also to suggest that some time will intervene between this first woe of the Arabian locusts, and the next of the Euphratean horsemen." See also Faber, *Sacr. Calend.* vol. ii. p. 411. Accordingly, "*some time*" is certainly assumed to have intervened in the systems proposed by these commenta-

tors; for Bishop Newton supposed the first woe to have ended A. D. 762, and the second to have begun A. D. 1281, and Mr. Faber, agreeing with Bishop Newton in the date assigned to the termination of the first woe, makes the second to begin 9th June, 1301.

Bossuet, who supposes the first woe to have been the early heresies in the reign of the Emperor Severus, dates its commencement A. D. 196, and makes the second woe begin "dans les environs de l'an 260 et 270." *Cœuvres*, Versailles, 1815, tom. iii. p. 277.

^g Chap. ix. 17.

told) "was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths^h."

But the most remarkable circumstance revealed respecting this great army of horsemen is, that they appear to have been called forth by the setting free of the four angels who were bound in the River Euphrates; for with the loosing of these angels the prophecy begins. Immediately on the sounding of the sixth trumpet, the apostle heard "a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, loose the four angels which are bound in the great River Euphrates."

It has been inferred from this, that the four angels here spoken of must be evil angels, because it can hardly be supposed that good angels should have been boundⁱ; and hence many commentators have

^h Ver. 18.

ⁱ Comp. Tob. viii. 3. The opinion, that the four angels are demons, and that the prophecy relates to the times of Antichrist, is maintained by Bede (A. D. 701); Andreas Cæsariensis (8th or 9th cent.), and his follower Arethas; Rupertus Tuitiensis (A. D. 1111); Richardus a S. Victore (A. D. 1150); and others. It must suffice to quote the words of Andreas, as he refers to the opinions of older commentators: "Sunt qui hosce angelos quatuor ex primariis et illustrioribus esse putant, nempe Mi-

chaelem, Gabrielem, Raphaellem et Urielem, qui hactenus quidem divinæ contemplationis jucunditati et ubertati alligati tenentur; tum vero, nimirum sub diem judicii cum innumerabilium angelorum multitudine ad impiorum condemnationem solventur, ac tanquam Dei ministri tertiam mortalium partem inter necioni dabunt. Ego vero hosce etiam non angelos sed pessimos dæmones esse existimo, quos juxta divinum mandatum e sublimi cælorum altari (cujus exemplum in veteri tabernaculo extabat) ejectos, et per Christi in car-

concluded that the army to whose motions their liberation gives birth, shall be, like the locusts, an army of evil spirits; sent forth with still more formidable powers than their predecessors, and permitted, not to torment only, but *to kill* "the third part of men."

It seems clear, however, that the loosing of the four angels will in some way be the cause of the invasion by this fearful army; for the slaying of the third part of men, which in one place is spoken of as occasioned by the fire, and smoke, and brimstone, which proceeded out of the mouths of the horses, is in another place attributed to the angels themselves¹. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to infer that they will be in some eminent degree the leaders or directors of the army of horsemen.

Again, it must be observed, that the four angels are said to have been bound at or in "the River Euphrates;" and we are therefore probably to look to that region as the scene of this great judgment; inasmuch as the prophecy seems distinctly to assert, that from thence shall issue the great multitude of

nem adventum ad certum locum ablegatos et alligatos, unus quispiam ex angelorum numero liberos eo tempore dimittet, quo gentes conturbent et vexent," &c. Bibl. Patr. Paris, 1654, tom. i. col. 1562, and Dr. Cramer's edit. of the original Oxon. 1840, pp. 321 and 528.

The principal argument employed by those commentators who suppose the army of horsemen to be also evil spirits, is drawn from their great numbers, and is thus stated by Corn.

a Lapide: "Denique si ducenti milliones hi tantum essent hominum, utique continerent majorem partem hominum impiorum (pauci enim tunc erunt pii et justi) qui puniendi erunt hac plaga, non autem punient alios unde videtur, potius partem hujus numeri fore demonum, alioqui enim impii punirentur per homines æque, imo magis, impios," &c. Comm. in loc. p. 179.

¹ Comp. ver. 15 and 18.

horsemen who are to be the instruments of the predicted massacre, wherein "the third part of men" shall be slain^k.

This conclusion is in exact conformity with the inference, to which, in a former course of Lectures, we were led from a consideration of the prophecies of Daniel; namely, that the countries in the region of the Euphrates, once the seat of such mighty empires, are destined, at some future period, to recover their political power, and to become the scene of the last great struggle between the prince of this world, and the people of God^l.

Two other circumstances remain to be noticed in this part of the prophecy:

The first is *the duration* of this judgment, which is thus defined: "And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men." It is not, however, very clear whether these words may not denote rather the rapidity of the predicted massacre, than its total duration; for the translators of our English Bible have noted in the margin ano-

^k It was the almost universal belief of the ancients that Antichrist shall arise from this region: Andreas (in loc.) says, "Credibile fit quoque Euphratis ob id mentionem fieri, quod Antichristus ex illis locis exoriturus creditur;" and Arethas, "neque explodendum aiunt si dicantur dæmones ad Euphratem alligati quandoquidem brevi inde Antichristus processu-

rus a captivis Hebræis, qui vel in Jerusalem fuerint reservati, vel in illis locis commorati." See also Malvenda de Antichristo, Lib. iii. c. 12.

^l See Discourses on the Prophecies relating to Antichrist in the writings of Daniel and St. Paul. Lect. III. See also Mr. Burgh's Lectures on the Revel. (4th Edit.) p. 198-9.

ther version which the original will very well bear, and which will give to the passage this latter signification: "And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared at that very hour, and day, and month, and year (*ἡτοιμασμένοι εἰς τὴν ὥραν, καὶ ἡμέραν, καὶ μῆνα, καὶ ἐνιαυτὸν*) for to slay the third part of men^m."

The second important circumstance is the fact, that, at the period spoken of, the men upon whom this judgment is to fall, will be immersed in idolatry and wickedness of the grossest character; and that those of them who shall escape destruction, shall continue impenitent, in the practice of their former impieties: "and the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their theftsⁿ."

^m So Beza, "parati ad horam et diem," &c. Rosenmüller says: "Ἐτοιμασμένοι εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν κ. τ. λ. positum esse videtur pro *in ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ, quovis tempore* ad mala inferenda parati." Schol. in loc. And Ewald, "*parati quovis tempore*;" frustra enim *εἰς* idem esse sumitur quod *in*, et ipsa sententia hæc jejuna foret; sed sensus hic est; parati in hanc horam, diem, mensem, annum, i. e. in hoc ipsum temporis momentum, quo ad impios cruciandos eorum opera

uti Deo placuit, dudum parati et constituti tum Deo omnia moderante, tum ipsorum libidine nocendi occasionem præstolante." Comment in loc. Bossuet says: "Ils n'attendoient que le signal. Le temps marqué si particulièrement par le prophète, fait voir combien précisément Dieu décide des momens." Œuvres, tom. iii. p. 278.

ⁿ It may be convenient to the reader to have here a short synopsis of the interpretations

But the massacre by the angels of Euphrates and their accompanying army of horsemen, is a part only

proposed for this part of the prophecy by the principal modern commentators:

Grotius takes the four angels to be the generals of Vespasian, Titus, Mucianus, and Tiberius Alexander whose armies penetrated as far as the Euphrates. Hammond supposes them to be the generals of Vespasian, who were *bound*, because Vespasian was for a long time hindered by the affairs of Rome from coming against Jerusalem; and bound *in the Euphrates*, i. e. in Rome, for the Euphrates surrounded Babylon, and is here put for the city Babylon, i. e. for Rome. Others suppose four *nations* to be intended, viz., the Arabs, Saracens, Tartars, and Turks, who, prior to the period foretold, dwelt beyond the Euphrates, and were now permitted to cross it. This is the theory of Pareus, Cotter, &c. (Ap. Poli Synops). Others (Durham, Forbes, Piscator, ap. Poli Synop.) suppose the Mahomedans to be foretold, who are called *four*, either to denote a *sufficient* number, or to indicate that this plague would extend to the *four* corners of the earth; or because there was (according to Durham) a *fourfold* difference among them, viz., in government, place, nature, and rites. Mede, Sir Isaac Newton, and Bishop Newton, suppose the Turks to be the subject of the prophecy; because they divided themselves, after they had

crossed the Euphrates, into four sultanies, viz., Asia minor, A.D. 1080; Aleppo, A.D. 1079; Damascus, A. D. 1079; and Antioch, or rather Bagdad, A. D. 1055; and the loosing of the four sultanies took place after the crusades, i. e. about the year 1300. Daubuz makes the four angels to be Ortogrul, and his three sons Condoz, Sarubani, and Othman; and supposes the loosing to have taken place when the Ottomans were invited over by Cantacuzen A. D. 1346. Faber supposes the four angels to be four Turkish dynasties, viz., Persia, Kerman, Syria, and Rhoum, A. D. 1092: they were loosed about the year 1290, [although "the existence and even the name of the first three of these dynasties had expired" long before; Sacr. Cal. ii. p. 414.] and they killed the third part of men, i. e. destroyed the Roman empire in the East, A. D. 1453. The same opinion for substance is adopted by Keith and Habershon. Lowman and Doddridge make the angels to predict the Saracens, who were loosed A. D. 513, and are spoken of as *four* merely to denote the universality of their ravages. Mr. Cunningham supposes the number *four* to be mystical, signifying *complete, entire*; and Euphrates, he says, is put for the Turkish nation, "in the same manner as the Thames might be used to denote the English, or the

of the second woe. Other events of deep importance were also revealed to the apostle as about to take place before the sounding of the seventh trumpet; for it was not until after these additional revelations, that the proclamation was made: "The second woe is past, and the third woe cometh quickly°."

Before this further prophecy, however, and perhaps to indicate its momentous importance, the apos-

Forth the Scottish nation;" but he agrees with Mr. Faber in supposing the destruction of the Eastern empire to be the event foretold.

In the interpretation of the hour, day, month, and year, there is still greater diversity of opinion among commentators, and many of those who agree in the general outline, differ as to the meaning of this particular period. Some reject the computations which suppose it to be a series of years, and maintain that it denotes only a fixed or appointed time, as Grotius, Hammond, Daubuz, Lowman, Doddridge, &c. Mede takes it to signify a period of 396 years, beginning A. D. 1057, when the Turks took Bagdad, and ending A. D. 1453, when they took Constantinople. Sir Isaac Newton makes it 391 years, beginning A. D. 1063, when Olub-Arsian began to conquer the nations upon the Euphrates, and ending A. D. 1453, when the Turks slew the third part of men, i. e. conquered the Greek Empire, and took Constantinople. Bishop Newton makes the period 391

years and 15 days, from the first victory of the Turks over Christians, A. D. 1281, to the last, the taking of Cameniec from the Poles, A. D. 1672. The Greek Church, he maintains, was "the third part of men" who were killed by those plagues; and the Latin Church, "the rest of men," who repented not of their idolatries. Mr. Faber computes this period as 396 years, 3 months, beginning with the reign of Othman, June 9th, 1301, and ending with Prince Eugene's victory, at Zenta, 1st September, O. S., or 11th September, N. S. 1697. Mr. Cunninghame supposes it to denote the period of their *preparation* for destroying men, not the period in which they shall destroy, and makes it 391 years, from A. D. 1057 to A. D. 1448. Mr. Keith interprets it also as a period of *preparation*, consisting of 326 years 103 days, from A. D. 1057 to A. D. 1453. Mr. Habershon makes it the period during which the Turks will hold Constantinople, viz., 391 years one month, from May 29, 1453 to June, 1844.

° Rev. xi. 14.

tle is prepared for its reception by that remarkable intermediate vision upon which I had occasion to make some remarks in my last discourse^p. In it St. John was inaugurated into his prophetic office, in a manner exactly similar to the inauguration of Ezekiel, and commissioned "to prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings^q." And perhaps we may discern the reason of this solemn ceremony in the fact that the remaining visions all relate to the last great struggle between the Church of Christ and the powers of darkness, the finishing of "the mystery of God," and the glorious consummation in which "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and HE shall reign for ever and ever^r."

On this intermediate vision (which appears to have been intended chiefly to prepare the apostle for the reception of what followed^s), it will not be neces-

^p See p. 95, sq.

^q Rev. x. 11. Compare also the inauguration of Jeremiah, i. 7-10. The allusion, however, is manifestly to the exactly parallel case of Ezekiel; and the mention of "many people, and nations, and tongues," in the commission of St. John, seems intentionally contrasted with the more limited commission of Ezekiel, to whom it was said (ch. iii. 5, 6): "For thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech, and of an hard language, but to the house of Israel; not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language,

whose words thou canst not understand."

^r Rev. xi. 15, and comp. x. 6, 7.

^s A great number of commentators, perhaps the majority of them, suppose this vision to be prophetic of certain events in the Christian Church. The ancient commentaries attributed to Cæcumenius and Arethas, or Andreas Bishop of Cæsarea, seem to have interpreted the vision as merely introductory or prefatory to that which follows: but other ancient commentators of the allegorical school, as Primasius,

sary to dwell at any great length. It must suffice to observe, that "a mighty angel" was seen to come

Bede, Richardus a S. Victore, Berengaudus, &c., apply it to the propagation of Christianity. The following summary of the exposition of Berengaudus may be taken as a specimen of this class of commentaries. The general subject of this prophecy is the growth of the Church, notwithstanding the persecutions foretold in the preceding visions. The strong angel is Christ (Ps. xxiv. 8), clothed with a cloud, i. e. with human nature; a rainbow (i. e. His mercy) about His head; His face as the sun, for Christ is the sun of righteousness; His feet a column of fire, i. e. the Church, consisting of two people, Jews and Gentiles, and yet one; "ex duobus ergo pedibus una columna efficitur [so this author read, although the modern Vulg. reads *columnæ*] quia ex duobus populis ex Judæis videlicet et gentibus, una Ecclesia Dei fabricatur." Or else the two feet denote the Old and New Testaments. The little book open is the same as the sealed book, i. e. Holy Scripture, which Christ has opened to the doctors of His Church; Christ cried with a lion's voice through the Gospel, which has sounded forth throughout all the world; the seven thunders are the seven cardinal virtues, "septem ergo tonitrua loquuta sunt, quando per doctrinam Evangelii sublimitas virtutum cœpit demonstrari." The voice

from heaven is the voice of the Church; and the command to seal what the seven thunders uttered, denotes the prudent reserve of the first preachers of Christianity, who seeing the infirmity of the Gentiles who believed, withheld the severer precepts,—"*non ausi sunt eis austeriora Christi præcepta committere*,"—lest they should deter them from embracing the Gospel (1 Cor. iii. 2). The seventh angel denotes the preachers who shall labour at the end of the world; and when Christ sware that in their days the mystery of God shall be finished, His meaning is, that then shall come the end, when the number of the elect shall be accomplished. St. John is here a type of all the apostles; the voice commanding him to take the book from the angel, is the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by which the apostles deserted all things for Christ, taking from Him the doctrine of the Gospel. Holy Scripture is sweet in the mouth, that is, in the mind or contemplation of the Christian; but when it leads us to discern our sins, and reveals to us the punishment of sin, then it is bitter in the consciences of sinners. Or if we take this as applicable personally to St. John, then the eating of the book denotes the inspiration he received to enable him after his return from Patmos to write his Gospel, and

down from heaven, "clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it

thus *again* to preach before many nations and kings. "Liber igitur qui in ore dulcis fuit amaritudinem ventri generavit: quia sancti viri, quanto amplius in meditatione divinarum scripturarum dediti sunt, quantoque eorum meditatio dulcior fit in mente, tanto majorem amaritudinem carni suæ exhibent, affligendo videlicet eam jejuniis, vigiliis, abstinentia, cæterisque cruciatibus, quibus caro adteritur." Opp. B. Ambros. (Ed. Bened.) tom. ii. Append. col. 541, sq.

Petrus Aureolus supposes the angel in the first part of the vision to represent the Emperor Justinus, the great opponent of Arianism; the seven thunders are the doctors of the Church by whom that heresy was crushed: the little book denotes the epistles sent out by the emperor in defence of the Catholic faith; and St. John is commanded not to write what the thunders uttered, because during the life of Theodoric, the orthodox were unable openly to praise God. In the rest of the vision the angel is the Emperor Justinian; the little book is the Codex of civil Law; and it was sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly, because Justinian before his death was perverted to the Eutychian heresy.

Of modern interpretations it must suffice to mention the following: Mr. Faber supposes the little book to be identical

with Rev. xi.-xiv, inclusive; being the history of the western Church, collateral with the period allotted in the system of the same writer to the sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpets, and beginning with A. D. 604; but he seems to agree with Mede and Bishop Newton in considering the tenth chapter as merely introductory, intended to explain how St. John received the prophecy contained in chapters xi.-xiv., and giving an account of his inauguration into his prophetic office. Mede says, "Peracto sigillorum curriculo, quo res Imperii describebantur, ad alteram Prophetiam itur, multo nobilissimam, utpote Ecclesiæ seu Religionis fata continentem. Ad eam instituitur Joannes traditione et comestione Libri aperti, quasi Doctoratu facultatis propheticæ imbuendus;" and having described the eating of the little book, he adds: "sic fuit Joannis inauguratio; sequitur Prophetia, quæ ab ejusdem circa Templum Dei facto inchoat, &c." Works, p. 477-8.

Daubuz, however, considers this vision to denote the German Reformation. The mighty angel is Luther; the little book denotes the republication of the Gospel which took place at that period: the seven thunders are the seven kingdoms that received the Reformation, viz., 1. Germany, 2. Switzerland, 3. Sweden, 4. Denmark and Norway, 5. England and Ireland, 5. Scot-

were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire." In his hand was "a little book, open;" "and he set his right

land, and 7. the Netherlands. The apostle was forbidden to write what the thunders uttered, to show that the Reformation would not all at once prevail, but would continue to exist chiefly in these seven kingdoms; St. John is therefore here a type of those Reformers, who erroneously supposed that the Reformation was to spread, and to become the completion of the mystery of God: and, as a type of the Reformers, he takes the Gospel from the hand of Luther, and transmits it to posterity.

Mr. Keith also considers the prophecy as fulfilled in the Reformation—but the angel he supposes to be our Lord, in the character of the angel of Reformation: his right foot is on the sea, i. e. on England, and his left on the land, i. e. on Germany, pointing out those two countries as the chief seats of the reformed religion. The little book is the Bible, opened by vernacular versions, &c.; the seven thunders are seven periods of war which followed the Reformation from the year 1569, to the close of the American war in 1782.

Mr. Cunninghame supposes the vision to predict the near approach of the time of the end. The little book is a part of the sealed book; namely, the seventh part of it, containing the seventh seal, and all the remaining portion of the Apocalypse. Our Lord appears clothed with a cloud to show that the

hour approaches when He will come with the clouds of heaven. The rainbow is the emblem of the covenant of peace; the book is open in His hand, to signify that the period is arrived when its mysteries shall be disclosed; His right foot is on the sea, and His left foot on the land, to denote that He is now about to take possession of His kingdom; His crying with a loud voice is emblematical of the awful sounding of the seventh trumpet; the seven thunders are emblematical of the seven vials of wrath, foretold in ch. xv.; the apostle is forbidden to write what they uttered, "probably because their contents were to be fully declared and shewn forth" in the subsequent prophecy of the vials. After reading this exposition one is hardly prepared to learn that all this predicts an event now past; but so it is: "the descent of the angel," Mr. Cunninghame tells us, "is the French Revolution of 1789." "This great event, which shook Europe to its centre, and was the precursor or prelude of the SEVENTH TRUMPET, appears to be indicated by the cry of the angel; and the SEVEN THUNDERS which follow his cry, appear to begin at the actual sounding of that trumpet, and the war of Europe and fall of the French monarchy in 1792." Diss. on the Seals and Trumpets (4th Edit.) chap. viii.

^t Many ancient MSS., and

foot on the sea and his left foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices."

That these thunders were not like ordinary thunders, but voices uttering articulate sounds, and communicating to the apostle a revelation, which was perhaps a necessary part of his preparation for the prophetic office, is evident from his having been about to write what they made known to him, and from the voice which said unto him: "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not."

But the circumstance in this vision most directly connected with the subject of the present course of lectures, is that recorded in the verses which I have chosen as the text of this discourse. The angel, in the most solemn manner, "lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are; and the earth, and the things which are therein; and the sea, and the things which are therein; that there should be time no longer, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he should begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets."

This is an express intimation, first, that the time

other authorities, read *βιβλίον*. The common reading *βιβλαρίδιον* has also high authority: several MSS. read *βιβλιδάριον*. The difference is unimportant.

Primasius reads, "habebat in manu sua *librum* apertum," the modern Vulg. reads "*libellum*."

" Rev. x. 4.

to be occupied in the remainder of this vision, up to the period of the sounding of the seventh trumpet, will be short—for the oath of the angel most probably signifies “that *delay* shall be no longer”^v—and secondly, that “in the days of the voice of the seventh angel,” we are to look for the great and final consummation, the establishment of our Lord’s everlasting kingdom, and the fulfilment of all things that are foretold by the prophets.

After this solemn and awful announcement of the near approach of the great Day of Christ, the apostle was commanded to take the little book from the hand of the angel, who instructed him to eat it up; telling him that it should be not only sweet in his mouth as honey, like the roll eaten by Ezekiel^w, but, also bitter in his belly; to intimate, perhaps, that the office to which he was called was one, not of honour and dignity only, but also of bitter self-denial and personal danger; or else to signify the mixed character of the succeeding prophecies, in which predictions of the ultimate victory of the truth, the glories

^v The original words are, ὅτι χρόνος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι, where χρόνος is taken to signify *delay* by a great number of commentators; Grotius paraphrases the words thus: “non diu erit, quin arcanum Dei impleatur,” and the same view for substance is taken by Hammond, Brightman, Wakefield, Doddridge, Vitringa, Burgh, &c. Mede explains it “tempus quatuor monarchiarum aut (quod vero

propius, sed tantundem est) novissimi regni, i. e. Romani, periodus novissima temporis, temporum, et dimidii temporis.” Works, p. 476; and Bishop Newton, Lowman, Daubuz, &c. take the words to signify: “the time (i. e. of the fulfilment) shall not be as yet, but shall be when the seventh trumpet sounds.”

^w Ezek. iii. 3.

in store for the faithful, and the triumphs of Christ, are intermingled with a forewarning of fearful apostacy, idolatries, blasphemies, and impieties, as well as of persecutions and massacres of those, who shall have grace to keep the faith, and resist the evil.

In connexion with the eating of the book also, and perhaps as the interpretation of it, the angel says to St. John : “Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings^{*} :” words which must be understood as conferring upon

^{*} Rev. x. 11. From the word *again* in this passage was derived the ancient opinion (a further proof of the early prevalence of literal interpretation) that St. John was still alive (comp. John, xxi. 22, 23); and that he shall appear with Enoch and Elijah to prophesy again in the times of Antichrist. This opinion is thus mentioned in the ancient commentary on the Apocalypse, or Συλλογὴ ἐξηγήσεων ἐκ διαφορῶν ἁγίων ἀνδρῶν, attributed to Arethas, and lately published at Oxford by Dr. Cramer: οὐκ ἀγνοῖεν δὲ δι’ ὡς ἀπο τουτουτοῦ ρητοῦ τοῦ “δι’ οὗ πάλιν προφητεῦσαι” ἔχουσι δεῖξαν οἱ πολλοί, ὡς μέχρι τῆς συντελείας ὁ μακάριος οὗτος ἀπόστολος ζῶν ἤξει κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦ Ἀντιχρίστου μετὰ Ἐνῶχ καὶ Ἡλίου, ἅμα αὐτοῖς ἐπανορθούμενος τοὺς θνητοὺς ἀνθρώπους, καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἀντιχρίστου ἀποκτανθήσεται. So that it would appear that up to the time of this author (who is supposed to have flourished in the tenth century) this was a very general opinion. It is mentioned also

by Œcumenius (edited by Dr. Cramer from the Cod. Coisl. 224), who seems rather to incline to it; he notices indeed the other opinion, which Arethas seems to approve (viz., that the word *again* refers to the Gospel of St. John, which was written after the Apocalypse), and then adds, ἢ τὸ μήπω τοῦτον θανάτου γίνεσθαι· ἐπὶ τίλει δὲ ἐλεύσεσθαι τῆς ἀπάτης τοῦ Ἀντιχρίστου τὴν παραδοχὴν κωλύονται, p. 531. The opinion that πάλιν referred to St. John’s Gospel was, however, among the ancients very general; it is embraced by Primasius, Bede, Ambrosius, Ansbertus or Autpertus, Berengaudus, &c. The last-named writer thus expresses it: “Prophetavit, id est, prædicavit per Evangelium suum quod postea scripsit, omnibus gentibus, et linguis, et regibus multis; quia per omnes gentes dispersum est, et in meditatione ejus omnes terrarum populi, regesque multi proficiunt.”—Opp. B. Ambros. Append. tom. ii. p. 543 (Ed. Bened.).

the apostle the same office under the New Testament, in reference to the Gentiles, which the prophets of the Old Testament exercised in regard to Israel.

And accordingly in the next scene of the prophecy we find him called upon to perform a significant action, exactly similar to those which were so frequently imposed on the ancient prophets, under the Jewish dispensation.

“A reed like unto a rod” was given unto him, and he was commanded by the same angel who had caused him to eat the book, saying, “Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple, leave out and measure it not; for it is given to the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months’.”

This symbolical action imports the rebuilding and restoration of the Temple, and its partial preservation from the profanation which the outer court and the holy city were to undergo from the Gentiles. This is evident from the parallel passages to be found in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. In the vision exhibited to Ezekiel, for example, where the restoration of the temple is manifestly foretold, the prophet was addressed by “a man whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed^z,” who proceeded to measure every part of the building, and to describe

^y Rev. xi. 1, 2.

^z Ezek. xl. 3.

its use and destination. Zechariah in like manner beheld "a man with a measuring line in his hand," who stated in answer to the prophet's inquiry, that he went forth "to measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof;" and this is immediately followed by the prediction,—given to the prophet apparently as the explanation of what he saw,—"Jerusalem shall be inhabited, as towns without walls, for the multitude of men and cattle therein^a." And lastly, there is a further example of the same thing in another passage of the Apocalypse itself, where the establishment of the new Jerusalem is foretold by a symbolical action exactly similar; "and he that talked with me" (says the Apostle) "had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the walls thereof^b."

Thus it appears that the act of measuring the temple denotes its restoration to the worship of God, and to the offices of Divine Service: and this seems strongly confirmed by the reason that is given to the apostle for the command to leave out the court which was without the temple, and to measure it not; namely, "because it was given to the Gentiles," to be by them profaned along with the holy city, and trodden under foot.

The testimony, therefore, which this prophecy, literally understood, has given us, is clearly this: that at the time predicted, Jerusalem shall be inhabited

^a Zech. ii. 1-4.

^b Rev. xxi. 15.

again, and the temple rebuilt: that after this restoration the city shall be taken and sacked by the Gentiles, the outer court also of the temple seized upon and profaned, but the sanctuary itself, and a remnant of them that worship therein, graciously preserved in the midst of the surrounding desolation. We are told further that the power of the Gentiles in the holy city shall be limited in duration to forty and two months, or, as the same period is elsewhere defined in Scripture, to twelve hundred and sixty days, or three years and a half.

I have already more than once had occasion to notice the remarkable parallelism which exists between the Apocalyptic prophecies and our Lord's memorable prediction of His second coming; and here again you can scarcely fail to be struck with it; for this delivery of Jerusalem to the Gentiles for a limited period is expressly stated by Him to be one of the signs of His coming^c: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they

^c Comp. Matt. xxiv. 3. Luke, xxi. 7; Mark, xiii. 4.

shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled^d."

Here, you will observe, our Lord has predicted a gathering together of mighty armies around Jerusalem, a desolation of the city which it is hopeless to resist; and it is remarkable that in describing this desolation, the same terms employed by St. John were adopted also by Him, and that in both prophecies the power of the Gentiles is spoken of as limited in its duration. "Jerusalem," our Lord says, "shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, *παρουμένη ὑπὸ ἐθνῶν*, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled;" "the holy city," says St. John, "shall they tread under foot, *πατήσουσι*, forty and two months." May we not therefore reasonably believe that these two prophecies, belonging as they both do to the same period of our Lord's second advent, speak both of the same desolation of Jerusalem, and that "the times of the Gentiles," in our Lord's prediction, are identical with the period, already well-known to His hearers from the prophecies of Daniel, and which is defined in the Apocalypse as consisting of "forty and two months^e."

^d Luke xxi. 20-24.

^e Mr. Govett has noticed a parallelism between this prophecy and that which was given to Ezekiel after eating the roll of the book in which were written "lamentation, and mourn-

ing, and woe." He says, "The first prophecy which succeeds Ezekiel's eating the book, is remarkably in harmony with the first disclosures of the angel to St. John after his like action . . . 'Thou also, Son of Man, take

I shall conclude this discourse with one general remark on the portion of the prophecy which has just been explained.

thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and pourtray upon it the city, even Jerusalem. And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and set it for a wall of iron, between thee and the city; and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel.' It appears from the verses following, that the siege shall last three hundred and ninety days: a day for each year of their iniquity. And then it is added, to describe the dread nature of the siege: 'take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and lentiles, and beans, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel and make thee bread thereof, according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side (that is during the literal time of the represented siege) shalt thou eat thereof. And thy meat which thou shalt eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day: from time to time shalt thou eat it. Thou shalt also drink water by measure, the sixth part of an hin; from time to time shalt thou drink. And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man in their sight. And the Lord said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread *among the Gentiles* *whither I will drive them.*' Ezek.

iv. 1-3, 9-13. Here then, as Ezekiel foretells the siege, and its duration, and hints at the issue of it, so does the Evangelist more fully declare it. The issue of the siege will be the captivity of the Jews among the Gentiles, as regards their persons: and, according to the Apocalypse, the treading down of the holy city, forty and two months." Exp. of the Revel. p. 144.

If this parallelism be admitted, it may deserve consideration, whether the hour, and day, and month, and year, if we take that period to denote the duration of the period of slaughter predicted Rev. ix. 15, may not be identical with the 390 days of the siege foretold by Ezekiel: and if so, then the actual occupation of the holy city by the Gentiles, foretold by our Lord and by St. John, as also the carrying away of the Jews captive into all nations, foretold by our Lord and by Ezekiel, as the consequences of the siege, will take place after the massacre of the third part of men by the angels of Euphrates and their army of horsemen, and after it has been seen that the residue of men repent not of their murders and fornications, and idolatry and thefts. Rev. ix. 21. Compare Ezek. v. 11, 12.

It is more important, however, to observe, that there are

The prophecy, you will observe, speaks expressly of "the Temple of God," "the altar," "the court which is without the Temple," "the holy city," and "the city where our Lord was crucified," and therefore seems plainly to mark out Jerusalem as the scene of the events predicted. But notwithstanding this, the great majority of our modern commentators, differing from each other in almost every thing else, agree in asserting that Jerusalem is not intended. Bossuet, for example^f, who admits that the preceding prophecies relate to the Jewish people, fixes upon this very chapter as the point at which the Apocalypse ceases to predict the destinies of Israel, and begins to tell of the Gentiles: and Mede regards the measuring of the Temple, and the profanation of the outer court, and of the holy city, as a prophecy of

many prophecies of the Old Testament in which the same events appear to be predicted. See for example, the prophecy of Zechariah, where, after describing the restoration of Jerusalem (ix. 12-17, x.), the prophet speaks of war coming upon the land, (xi. xii. 1-5); this is followed by the repentance of Jerusalem, and the destruction of her enemies (xii. 6-14, xiii. xiv. 1-3); and then follows immediately a prophecy of the coming of Christ with His saints, and the establishment of His kingdom, together with the conversion of all nations to the worship of God (xiv. 4-21.) In this very remarkable prophecy the reader will observe, that the enemies of Jerusalem are spoken of as

Gentiles. "I will gather *all nations* against Jerusalem to battle." xiv. 2. Compare xii. 2. See Lacunza, Coming of the Messiah, part ii. Phen. x. s. 7. (Eng. Transl. vol. ii. p. 201, sq.)

^f Bossuet says, "Les trois *Væ* sont encore un signe certain pour faire comprendre à un lecteur attentif la liaison de tous les chapitres, c'est-à-dire, des précédens et des suivans. Car évidemment le premier *Væ* finit au v. 12 du chapitre ix. où finit en même temps ce qui avoit une relation plus particulière avec les Juifs; et le second *Væ* qui finit au chapitre xi. v. 14, comprend ce qui devoit arriver aux Gentils, &c." Sur l'Apocal. Œuvres, tom. iii. p. 316. Versailles, 1815.

the fates and fortunes of the *Gentile* Christian Church, in which opinion he has been followed by many subsequent writers^s.

^s Mede supposes the measurement of the inner temple to denote the purity of the primitive Christian Church, and the giving up of the outer court to the Gentiles, to signify the subsequent corruption of the Church by idolatry and superstition.

"*ATRIUM TEMPLI interius cum inibi adorantibus, calamo divino mensurabile, statum Ecclesiæ Christianæ primævum denotat, ad verbi Divini regulam examinatum, et examussim sanctum. ATRIUM exterius a Gentibus conculcatum et dimensioni Divinæ reijculum designat civitatem Dei sanctam, seu Ecclesiam Christianam, mox ab exitu temporum ATRII normalis (cui proxime succedit) novis idololatriis dandam, rebusque ejus, demolito jam penitus sub prioris Atrii statu Gentilium cultu, confirmatis, redintegratæ Idololatriæ, tanquam redivivi Ethnicismi, contagione prophanandam; uno verbo, Apostasiam Antichristianam mensibus xlii. annalibus in Ecclesia regnaturam.*" Works, p. 478.

Bishop Newton (following Daubuz and Vitringa) thinks that the measuring of the Temple "might allude more particularly to the Reformation from Popery;" and that the outer court being abandoned to the Gentiles, might imply that the majority of Christians shall continue in idolatrous and super-

stitious practices, "*Christians* only in name, but *Gentiles* in worship and practice,".... "and they shall tread under foot the holy city, they shall trample upon and tyrannize over the Church of Christ, for the space of forty and two months."

Mr. Faber adopts the same view, maintaining that the holy city is the Christian Church, and the Gentiles who trample it under foot are "the paganizing Christians of the Apostacy." "The new Gentiles of the Christian apostacy" (he says) "who pollute the holy city by treading it under foot, are allowed to occupy the outer court of the mystic temple, because they make an external profession of Christianity: but they are excluded from the temple itself and from its two inner courts, because they remain uncircumcised in heart and refuse to embrace the entire code of the Gospel." *Sacr. Calend.* vol. iii. p. 13.

This view differs from Mede's in considering those who are symbolized by the temple and altar to be contemporaries of the "mystical Gentiles" who are to trample down the holy city; which is certainly more in accordance with the letter of the prophecy. See Mr. Faber's note on Mede's system, *ubi supra*, p. 16.

Mr. Cunningham agrees for

But the principles which I have endeavoured to recommend to you as likely to contain the best clue to the right interpretation of the Apocalypse, do not suffer us to depart so widely from the express words of Holy Scripture, lest we fall under that awful condemnation: "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book^b."

Unless it can be shown, therefore, that the literal interpretation is inconsistent with religion or with reason, or with some other text of Scriptureⁱ, we are

substance with Bishop Newton and Mr. Faber, supposing this prophecy to predict the separation of the reformed from the corrupt portion of the Church in the sixteenth century. Diss. chap. ix.

Of those commentators who suppose the Apocalypse to have been fulfilled in the early ages of the Church, it must suffice to mention here Hammond and Bossuet. Hammond takes the measuring of the Temple, &c., to denote Adrian's rebuilding of Jerusalem, and setting up the heathen worship there, whereby the holy city was profaned and trodden under foot of the Gentiles. Bossuet interprets the prophecy of the Dioclesian persecution, in which he is followed by Calmet and De Sacy.

Petrus Aureolus supposes the measurement of the Temple

to predict the institution of the feast of the Dedication of Churches by Pope Felix, in the year 885. By him it was enacted that the holy communion should not be celebrated in any unconsecrated places; and he therefore authorized the form for consecration of Churches, one part of which was that the Bishop should go round the church on the outside in procession, and write the alphabet on the floor within from angle to angle, thus measuring the temple and altar, and leaving the court without to the Gentiles, i. e. prohibiting the celebration of divine service in places not thus measured and consecrated.

^b Rev. xxii. 19.

ⁱ Mr. Faber rests his assumption that the literal Jerusalem cannot be intended, altogether on the untenable hypothesis,

bound, I conceive, to receive the sacred prophecies of God in their plain and literal sense, not seeking to square them by our own narrow and bigoted preconceptions, but, according to the apostolic precept, giving heed to the sure word of prophecy, "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts¹."

We cannot, therefore, doubt that the literal sense of the prophecy before us speaks of Jerusalem as the scene of the events foretold. The measuring of the temple denotes, as we have seen, its restoration; after which the holy city shall be encompassed with armies, and trodden under foot of the Gentiles forty and two months.

In this there is nothing impossible, nothing inconsistent with faith or reason, nothing which can furnish the smallest justification to us for departing from the natural meaning of the words. And the remainder of the prophecy goes on to describe the events which shall take place in the holy city during the twelve hundred and sixty days of its profanation by the Gentiles: the testimony and power of God's witnesses, their martyrdom, miraculous resurrection

that the 1260 days are 1260 years; he says: "Hence the holy city here spoken of cannot be the literal Jerusalem: because the treading down of *this* holy city is limited to 1260 natural years; whereas the treading down of the literal Jerusalem by the literal Gentiles has already continued more than

seventeen centuries." *Ubi supra*, p. 9. In other words, having once persuaded ourselves that days are not days, we must abandon also the literal meaning of other words employed in holy Scripture, whenever their ordinary signification interferes with that hypothesis.

¹ 2 Pet. i. 19.

and ascension, the destruction of their enemies, and the repentance and conversion of the remnant of men.

But I must defer the consideration of these events to the next opportunity I may have of addressing you.

LECTURE V.

Per hunc Eliam, magnum mirabilemque prophetam, exposita sibi lege, ultimo tempore ante iudicium, Judæos in Christum verum, id est, in Christum nostrum esse credituros, celeberrimum est in sermonibus cordibusque fidelium. Ipse enim ante adventum Judicis Salvatoris non immerito speratur esse venturus: quia etiam nunc vivere non immerito creditur. *S. Augustin. De Civitat. Dei. Lib. xx. c. 29.*

LECTURE V.

REV. xi. 3, 4.

“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand, two hundred, and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth.”

WE are now arrived at that portion of the Apocalypse from which were deduced many of the opinions received with such singular unanimity in the ancient Church, on the power and character of the last great Antichrist, his persecution of the Christian name, the overthrow of his power by the second coming of our Lord, and the final establishment of Christ's everlasting kingdom. These ancient opinions I shall have occasion to notice, from time to time, to point out their agreement with the natural and literal signification of the sacred text, and to ask you to consider without prejudice whether they are not, therefore, more worthy of your adoption, and more likely to represent with fidelity the mind of the Holy Ghost, than any of the far-fetched, laborious, and inconsistent systems which modern expositors have proposed.

We have seen that the events constituting the second woe, foretold on the sounding of the sixth trumpet, were divided in the prophecy into two periods. The first of these, as the words are generally understood, is a period of "an hour, a day, a month, and a year;" during which will take place a massacre of the third part of men, by the agency of an army of two hundred thousand thousand^a horsemen, led on or marshalled by the four angels who were bound in the great river Euphrates, and who were set free by the angel of the sixth trumpet, at the command of a voice which issued "from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God^b."

This formidable judgment, which, we are expressly told, will leave the survivors impenitent, immersed as before in idolatry and other sins, will be followed by a second period of forty and two months, or three years and a half, during which the holy city will be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, and the last great effort made by the enemy of all truth to annihilate the Christian name^c.

^a The common reading is *δύο μυριάδες μυριάδων*. Some MSS. and editions omit *δύο*, others omit both *δύο* and *μυριάδων*, making the number of the horsemen only 100,000; while others retaining *δύο* omit *μυριάδων*. See Griesbach. Primasius read "octoginta millia."

^b Rev. ix. 13-21.

^c Many of the symbolical commentators appear to consi-

der the prophecy of the witnesses as no part of the sixth trumpet, but as the contents of the little open book that was eaten by St. John, and, therefore, as a sort of episode interposed between the sixth and seventh trumpets. But there seems no reason whatsoever for supposing that any portion of the contents of the little book were made known. St. John was

The events of this second period, which now present themselves for our consideration, comprehend the history of the two witnesses ; their power, and office, and privileges ; their death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven ; the destruction of a portion of the city, and many of its inhabitants, by an earthquake, and the terrifying of the remainder, so that they “ gave glory to the God of heaven.”

That we may the better understand these events, I shall endeavour, first, to collect from the prophecy itself the particulars which are revealed ; and then, with a view to ascertain their real meaning, I shall make some remarks on the popular interpretations of them.

I. The prophecy, as has been already shewn, describes a season wherein Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, for a period of forty and two months.

During this occupation of the holy city, however, the inner temple, and the altar, and they that worship therein, shall be protected by some divine interposition, and not suffered to fall into the hands of the Gentile conquerors, who shall be in absolute

commanded to eat it, and then either the angel, or, according to another reading, the voice from heaven, makes known to him, in connexion with the symbolical action of measuring Jerusalem, the prophecy of the witnesses. To suppose this prophecy a part of the little book which the Apostle had eaten, seems a purely gratuitous hy-

pothesis. The other question, whether the prophecy of the witnesses be a part of the sixth trumpet, or an appendix to the sixth trumpet, is a mere question of words, and wholly unimportant, so long as we acknowledge that it must be fulfilled immediately *before* the seventh trumpet.

possession of the rest of the city, and even of the outer court of the temple.

The other events of this period comprehend the history of the two witnesses whom God will raise up, for the support and confirmation of the faithful under this fiery trial; and we shall now proceed to bring together the circumstances of their ministry, as they are foretold in the prophetic vision:

1. In the first place it is announced, that in the time of persecution described in the prophecy, God “will give power to his two witnesses,” or martyrs; and that “they shall prophesy, clothed in sackcloth, a thousand two hundred and three score days.”

This is precisely the number of days contained in the former period of forty and two months, during which the holy city shall be trodden down of the Gentiles: and as the two periods are thus placed in immediate juxta-position, it is natural to conclude that they are the same, and that the witnesses shall continue to give their testimony, and to prophesy, during the whole duration of the persecution^d.

^d The synchronism of the testimony of the witnesses, and the treading down of the holy city, seems to be very generally admitted. Mede places it in his first synchronism.—Works, p. 419. Bishop Newton says: “It” (viz. the period of twelve hundred and sixty days) “is the same space of time with the *forty and two months* before mentioned.” Mr. Faber says, “But forty-two months and twelve hundred

and sixty days express one and the same period. Therefore, the treading down of the holy city by the Gentiles, and the sackcloth ministration of the two witnesses, are synchronical.”—Sacr. Calend. vol. iii. p. 18. And Mr. Elliott, one of the latest commentators of the same school, makes the same admission.—Horæ Apocal. vol. ii. p. 536. See also Mr. Govett’s Expos. of the Revel. p. 155.

It may also be observed, that the mention of this remarkable period helps to identify this persecution with that foretold by Daniel, who tells us, that the blasphemous king of the 'fourth monarchy "shall wear out the saints of the Most High;" and that "they shall be delivered into his hand, until a time and times, and the dividing of time^e," or three years and an half.

It follows, also, that the commencement of this period must be dated from the occupation of the holy city by its Gentile conquerors, and the delivery of the Jewish people into the hands of the blasphemous king; and that it will terminate with the slaying of the witnesses, and the cessation of their testimony; for we read, "*And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.*" The slaying of the witnesses, therefore, must take place at the end of the twelve hundred and sixty days^f.

^e Dan. vii. 25. I have already shewn that "the saints of the Most High," in this prophecy of Daniel, must signify the Jews, as contradistinguished from Gentiles.—Lectures on the Proph. relating to Antichrist, &c. Lect. iv. pp. 159, 160. The reader cannot fail to perceive how strongly these views are confirmed by the prophecy now before us, where Jerusalem and the Jewish people are so manifestly the object of the persecution.

^f Mr. Faber distinguishes between the *testimony* of the witnesses, and their *prophesying in sackcloth*; their testimony he supposes to terminate with their death, *before* the conclusion of the twelve hundred and sixty days, or *years*, as he makes them; but their *prophesying in sackcloth*, he maintains is continued *after* their death and resurrection, after the termination of the second woe, and until near the end of the third woe. According to his system the witnesses were slain,

2. Secondly, it is to be observed, that although no mention is made of them in any former passage of the

and, therefore, completed their *testimony*, in January, 1686; they revived in August, 1689, and ascended in a cloud to heaven in 1690; the second woe passed away in 1697; the third woe commenced in 1789, but the twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days, and, consequently, the prophesying in sackcloth of the witnesses, will not terminate until 1864. For the argument by which he endeavours to shew that the testimony of the witnesses cannot be the same as their prophesying in sackcloth, see Sacred Cal. vol. iii. pp. 75–79. The whole force of his reasoning depends on the assumption that the twelve hundred and sixty supposed years “expire some time *in the course* of the third woe.” For the argument is this: The witnesses prophesy in sackcloth (as is expressly asserted, Rev. xi. 3), during the *whole* term of the twelve hundred and sixty years; but the witnesses are slain before the end of the twelve hundred and sixty years; therefore their *testimony*, which is finished on their being slain (as is also expressly asserted, Rev. xi. 7), must terminate before the twelve hundred and sixty years; and, therefore, before they have completed their prophesying in sackcloth. The assumption of this argument (viz. that the witnesses are slain before the end of the twelve hundred and sixty years), is thus

proved: The witnesses are slain before the termination of the second woe (Rev. xi. 7–14); but the twelve hundred and sixty years do not expire until some time after the commencement of the third woe; therefore, &c. The whole strength, therefore, of this “clear demonstration,” as Mr. Faber himself calls it, depends on the assumption, *that the twelve hundred and sixty years extend into the period of the third woe*; [in Mr. Faber’s chronology they expire only about a year before the end of the third woe]: but this is a mere consequence of the erroneous supposition, made by all the popular historical commentators, that the events foretold in the succeeding visions of the Apocalypse are subsequent in their fulfilment to those described under the second woe; it is manifest, therefore, that all expositors who suppose the witnesses to be the “Churches,” or bodies of Christians protesting against the beast described in future visions, must, if they suppose the fulfilment of those visions to be subsequent to the second woe, prolong the prophesying of the witnesses, and therefore, also, the termination of the twelve hundred and sixty days, beyond the termination of the second woe. This is one of the great difficulties of the historical commentators. Mr. Elliott (Horæ Apoc. vol. ii. p. 702) says very truly, that “few clauses in prophetic

Apocalypse, they are nevertheless here introduced, as if they had been previously well known to the Apostle: "I will give power unto my two witnesses;" τοῖς δυσὶ μάρτυσί μου. And the reason of this is manifest; for the angel, or, according to another reading^s, the voice, or power from heaven,

Scripture have occasioned expositors so much labour and trouble as this," alluding to Rev. xi. 7, of which he then proceeds to give an elaborate exposition. But surely the whole difficulty arises from the supposition that the witnesses are not individuals, but bodies of men,—the aggregate of all those who testify against the beast; and that the visions contained in succeeding chapters of the Apocalypse are subsequent also in their fulfilment. Thus the very fact that words so plain as ὅταν τελίσωσι τὴν μαρτυρίαν αὐτῶν should occasion such a world of perplexity, is a clear proof that this fundamental hypothesis of the modern historical expositors is irreconcilable with the plain words of the prophecy, and, therefore, ought to be abandoned, as a human addition, obscuring rather than elucidating the Word of God. Mr. Elliott has not adopted Faber's ingenious distinction between the testimony and the prophesying of the witnesses; he prefers attempting to shew that the verb τελίω signifies "not the mere finishing, but the going through, the complete performing of the function," and he explains ὅταν

τελίσωσι thus: "So soon as they might once have gone through the several component parts or acts of that testimony, so soon it might be said of them that they had fulfilled, or completed their testimony: yet not so as to imply that their whole period of testifying was at an end, or that they thereupon ceased to be any longer Christ's witnesses."

Others tell us that the words should be translated, "when they shall be about finishing," (Mede, Newton, Cunninghame, &c.); "Whilst they shall perform" (Daubuz); "When they shall have been fulfilling their testimony," &c. But who does not see that all these forced and far-fetched explanations are but struggles of the commentators to escape from the plain and obvious meaning of this passage, which forbids the extension of the twelve hundred and sixty days beyond the period of the second woe, and thus overturns the theories of this whole class of expositors.

^s Our English version, following the Vulgate Greek text, represents this prophecy as spoken by the angel from whom the apostle had received the little book. But Griesbach, on

by whom the whole of this prophecy was communicated to the Evangelist, goes on to say: "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth;" thus quoting the very words of the well-known prophecy of Zechariah^a, and, therefore, identifying the wit-

the authority of a large majority of MSS. Versions, and Fathers, omits the words *καὶ ὁ ἄγγελος ἔστηκει*, and reads the passage thus: *Καὶ ἐδόθη μοι κάλαμος ὅμοιος ῥαβδῷ, λέγων, ἔγειραι, κ. τ. λ.* The Latin Vulgate also renders: "Et datus est mihi calamus similis virgæ, et dictum est mihi, Surge," &c. This is more in accordance with verse 3, by which it appears that the Speaker throughout this prophecy is the Divine Being Himself.

^a The words of Zechariah, (iv. 14) are: "These are the two anointed ones (*בני הַיֵּהוָה* sons of oil, *Marg. υἱοὶ τῆς πίστεως*, LXX.) that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." The Chaldee Paraphrase, or Targum of Jonathan, translates these words: *ברין בני רכביא* "duo filii principum."

It is curious, and not without difficulty, that in the Apocalypse the witnesses are said to be *the two olive trees and the two candlesticks*, whereas in the vision there was but one candlestick exhibited to Zechariah. One can hardly help thinking, therefore, that by "the two candlesticks" St. John intended "the two olive branches," which in Zechariah are distinguished from the olive trees, and which

the angel, by giving but one answer to the two-fold question of the prophet, plainly identifies with the two anointed ones. This would reconcile the Apocalypse and Zechariah: in the former the witnesses are said to be the two olive trees, and also the two candlesticks: in the latter, the anointed ones are said to be the two olive trees, (*שני הַיֵּהוָה*), and also the two olive branches (*שתי שבלי הַיֵּהוָה*); and as the olive branches are described as "emptying through the two golden pipes the golden oil out of themselves," it does not seem impossible that St. John may have regarded them as lamps or candlesticks (*λυχνίαι*). Rabbi David Kimchi, in his Comm. on Zech. remarks that the prophet does not ask for an explanation of the great candlestick seen in his vision (that having been already explained by the angel, ver. 5-10), but only asks the meaning of the two olive trees, and of the two branches of the olive trees; and he says: "the angel replied to the two questions briefly and mystically, (*ברמו*), and said unto him: 'These are the two sons of oil;' and the prophet understood his answer." That is, this was the answer to both the questions proposed by

nesses with the two deliverers of Israel, there predicted.

A short examination, therefore, of the vision in Zechariah, thus distinctly referred to, may throw light on the prophecy before us. The object of that vision was to impress upon the prophet that the Jewish Church was to be delivered from her trials and difficulties, "not by might, nor by power," but by the Spirit of the Lordⁱ. This truth was exhibited to Zechariah by a vision, in which he beheld "a candlestick, all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof, and two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof^j." The seven lamps are afterwards explained to be "the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth^k," and the two

the prophet. The two anointed ones, he says, were Zerubbabel and Joshua; "and he calls them *sons of oil*, because they were anointed with the oil of anointing, the one to the kingdom and the other to the priesthood."—M'Caul's Transl. pp. 45, 46. The same interpretation has been adopted by a large number of Christian commentators, as Vatablus, Calmet, Drusius, Menochius, Tirinus, Clarius (ap. Poli Synops. et Crit. Sac.).

St. Jerome (Comm. in loc.) mentions that some of the ancients interpreted the prophecy

in Zechariah of Enoch and Elias: "Quorum alter in præputio, alter in circumcissione placuit Deo et cum corpore raptus in cælum est." And St. Gregory (Hom. xii. in Ezek. n. 8) speaking of Enoch and Elias, says: "Qui utrique per Zachariam duæ olivæ, et per Johannem duo candelabra nominantur." See also Malvenda, de Antichristo, lib. x. c. 18.

ⁱ Zech. iv. 6.

^j Ver. 2, 3.

^k Ver. 10; comp. Rev. i. 4; v. 6; Heb. i. 4; and see above, p. 129, note ^e.

olive trees are said to be "the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth¹."

The Jewish Church, therefore, is to look for support in her trials, not to human might or power, but to the Spirit of the Lord, who by the ministry of angels, the seven "eyes of the Lord which run to and fro through the whole earth," will supply her with grace and sustenance, and, like the lamps of the symbolical candlestick, keep alive her light. While two anointed ones, prophets endowed with peculiar powers and privileges, and appointed to an especial mission,—or, as the Hebrew literally signifies, "sons of oil" (בני היצחור), instruments, or ministers, and channels, as it were, of God's grace, through whom gifts and graces, for the confirmation of the faithful, are communicated,—will be present in the time of need to renew and supply the exhausted oil of the golden candlestick.

We learn, therefore, from this vision, that the office of the two Apocalyptic witnesses,—as predicted to Zechariah long before the second and more complete revelation made to St. John,—will be to confirm and support the sinking faith of the Jewish believers, under the bitter affliction foretold, when the abomination of desolation shall be seen standing in the holy place, and Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot of the Gentiles forty and two months. During the whole of this period they shall prophesy

¹ Zech. iv. 14.

“clothed in sackcloth,” mourning in humble penitence before God, for the sins of their people, then so severely visited; and perhaps protecting, by their miraculous powers, from the profanation to which the rest of the city was subjected, “the temple, and the altar, and them that worship therein.” For we read of them :

3. Thirdly, that “if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed^m.” Nor is this all, for they shall have “power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy;” and also “power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they willⁿ.”

Such, therefore, will be the extremity to which the Jewish Church shall be reduced in the awful persecution here foretold, that the revival of miraculous powers in the persons of the two witnesses will be necessary for its preservation. Nor is there any difficulty in understanding these miracles literally: for examples of miracles exactly similar, which no believer in Divine revelation attempts to explain otherwise than literally, are recorded in the inspired history of the Jewish nation. Elijah, for instance, on two several occasions, called down fire from heaven to destroy the captains of fifty, with their fifties, whom the ungodly king Ahaziah had sent to take him. The same Elijah, also, in the days of Ahab,

^m Rev. xi. 5.

ⁿ Ver. 6.

was enabled to shut up heaven for the space of three years and six months, the very same length of time during which the Apocalyptic witnesses are to exercise the same miraculous power. "Elias," says St. James, "was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for the space of three years and six months^o." Again, the power of turning the waters into blood, and of smiting the earth with all plagues, was literally exercised by Moses, for the delivery of Israel from Egyptian bondage. There is, therefore, nothing impossible, nothing inconsistent with faith or reason, in supposing that, under the great affliction which is foretold, the same miraculous powers will be committed to the two witnesses;—that like Elijah, when the Jewish Church was groaning under the tyranny of her idolatrous kings, and like Moses, when Israel was bowed down under the bondage of Egypt, they shall be sent for the confirmation and support of the Church in that bitter day of trial, in which the holy people shall be delivered over into the hand of him who shall "speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws^p;" "who shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people^q."

^o James, v. 17; comp. Luke, iv. 25; 1 Kings, xvii. 1; xviii. 1.

^p Dan. vii. 25.

^q Dan. viii. 24.

4, The next event in the history of the witnesses is thus foretold: "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them^r."

The beast is here mentioned by anticipation, for it is not until a subsequent vision that his origin and power, his blasphemous war against religion, and other particulars of his history, are for the first time made known. I have already noticed this mention of the beast, in the prophecy of the witnesses, as a remarkable proof that the visions of the Apocalypse are, many of them, synchronous, predicting contemporary events^s. In the case before us, the beast is spoken of as in existence contemporaneously with the witnesses, although he is seen "to rise up out of the sea" in a subsequent vision^t. The duration of his power is stated, in that vision, to be the same as that of the prophesying of the witnesses; for we read, that "power was given unto him *to continue* forty and two months^u;" from which it follows that his making war upon the witnesses, and killing them, will be the signal for his own destruction, although he will be then in the very plenitude of his power. And this is in exact accordance with other prophecies. Daniel, for example, represents the destruction of the wilful king as immediately and suddenly following his victories in Jerusalem: "He shall

^r Rev. xi. 7.

^s See above, p. 76.

^t Chap. xiii.

^u Rev. xiii. 5.

plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain ; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him^v."

At present, however, we are not so immediately concerned with this part of the subject. The circumstance to be noticed now is, that notwithstanding the miraculous powers of the witnesses—notwithstanding the fire that proceedeth out of their mouth, whereby whosoever would hurt them is killed, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit will be permitted to prevail against them for a season ; and to kill them ; in order that the destruction of the beast himself, and his kingdom, may be the more signal and unexpected, and that the delivery of the Church may be the more clearly seen of all men to have been wrought by no human power ; according to the prediction of Zechariah's vision : "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts^w."

5. The events which shall follow the death of the witnesses are next described in the prophecy : these are

First, "Their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." Here we have a further proof that Jerusalem will be the scene of these events ; for surely "the great city *where our Lord was crucified*," can denote Jerusalem, and Jerusalem only, which shall at that time

^v Dan. xi. 45. *

^w Zech. iv. 6.

resemble Sodom, in its iniquitous impurities, and Egypt, in its persecution of God's people*.

We learn, further, that the martyred witnesses shall be suffered to lie dead and unburied in the streets of the city for a period of three days and an half, during which the Gentile occupiers of Jerusalem, "they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves:" but "they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth'."

But, secondly, this triumph of the enemies of Christ shall be of short duration: for, at the end of three days and an half, "the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which saw them." This great miracle is followed by a still further recognition of their mission by the Almighty Him-

* Mr. Burgh adds: "No less definite is the note 'which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt,' of the city addressed by the prophet Isaiah, in the words: 'Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom' (ch. i. 10), and whose besetting sin, and worst mark of apostacy, was 'trusting in the shadow of Egypt, and strengthening themselves in the strength of Pharaoh' (ch. xxx. 1, 2)."—Lect. on the Revel. (4th edit.) p. 218. We may add, that these words

are also an additional proof that the literal Jerusalem is intended. For if by Jerusalem, in the prophecy, be really meant Rome, or any other literal city, then this city, so intended, is described by a double figure; it is *spiritually* "the city where our Lord was crucified," or Jerusalem, and it is also *spiritually* Sodom and Egypt. It seems very unreasonable to suppose that there should be thus figure within figure in the prophecy.

† Rev. xi. 8-10.

self: "They heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them^z."

6. The ascension of the witnesses was followed by an immediate judgment on the city, and its inhabitants: "And *the same hour* was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand, and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven."

We may conclude, therefore, that although the former judgments foretold under this woe trumpet, will leave men impenitent, the resurrection and ascension of the witnesses, and the sudden destruction of the city, and so many of its inhabitants, will have a more beneficial effect. The survivors will acknowledge, in these wonders, the hand of God, visibly stretched forth for the delivery of His Church, in the hour of her greatest need, and they will "give glory to the God of heaven^a."

* Rev. xi. 12. Some MSS. instead of ἤκουσαν, read ἤκουσα, "I heard a great voice," &c.; but the common reading seems better, because it does not appear that the history of the witnesses was exhibited in vision to St. John, but only communicated to him orally by an angel; or, according to the other reading (see note ^z, p. 181), by a voice from heaven.

^a No circumstance in the prophecy appears to have crea-

ted more difficulty to the historical commentators than this, that the remnant (οἱ λοιποὶ) who had escaped the earthquake, "gave glory to the God of heaven." Bishop Newton considers it unfulfilled. Mr. Faber thinks that they who gave glory to God were the Protestants; Mr. Cunninghame, the Papists; Mr. Elliott, the witnesses themselves. This last named author, in defence of the construction which he has given to the passage,

II. Having thus brought together the circumstances foretold in this prophecy, it is quite manifest that, taking them literally as they stand in the sacred text, without any attempt to explain them by figurative or symbolical interpretations, no such events have ever yet occurred in the history of the Church, and, consequently, that this prophecy is still unfulfilled.

It remains, therefore, now to confirm this conclusion, by a very brief review of the popular interpretations which profess to have found its fulfilment in past history ; and to point out their inconsistency with the plain letter of the prediction.

For instance: very few of this class of interpreters are willing to allow, that when the text speaks of "two witnesses," the precise number *two* is intended; whilst of those who admit that a duad of some sort is to be looked for in the fulfilment, far the greater part maintain, that not two individuals, or persons, but successions of individuals, or Christian Churches, are intended.

For this, however, no authority whatsoever can be found in the prophecy. The witnesses are described throughout in language implying personality: they are called "two prophets;" they are said to "prophecy clothed in sackcloth;" and the actions of per-

says: "It is contrary to the *whole tenor* of the Apocalyptic descriptions of the enemies of Christ, and His witnesses, to represent *them* as *giving glory to God*:" and he adds, "Nor

does any commentator that I have seen, advance an explanation of it (thus understood, as it is by them all) at all plausible."—Horæ Apoc. p. 753, n. 4.

sons are every where ascribed to them. They are spoken of as liable to be hurt, to be warred against, to be put to death; they work miracles; they lie dead in the streets of the city; they stand upon their feet; they hear the voice from heaven. Surely, then, they are persons, and human beings also, men of like passions and faculties with ourselves. In no other passage, either in the Old or New Testament, are the words *witness* (*μαρτυρ*) and *prophet* applied otherwise than to individuals or persons^b.

To this it has been said, that the witnesses are described under the figures of two olive trees, and two candlesticks; and that the latter of these symbols has already been expressly interpreted, in the opening vision of the Apocalypse, as emblematical of Churches^c, while the olive tree has been employed in the same signification by St. Paul, and by Jeremiah^d.

This argument can be consistently urged by those only who believe the witnesses to be two churches, and who so interpret the prophecy. They must also, in consistency, suppose the olive trees in Zecha-

^b The passages in which these words occur are too numerous for insertion here; but the reader is requested to test the truth of the statement made in the text, by referring to the words *μαρτυρ* and *προφήτης* in the Englishman's Greek Concordance (Bagster, Lond.), a book that ought to be in the hands of every student of the New Testament.

In the Old Testament, the

word *μαρτυρ* is applied, in Gen. xxxi. 52 (LXX.), to Laban's heap and pillar, but it is used evidently by a sort of personification, and the original is there *הָעַי*, not *עַי*.

^c Rev. i. 20.

^d Rom. xi. 17-26; Jer. xi. 16; Mr. Faber has used this argument, *Sacr. Cal.* vol. iii. p. 20; and Mr. Elliott, *Horæ Apocal.* vol. ii. p. 531.

riah to denote two Churches, contrary to the express words of that prophecy, where they are explained as "the two anointed ones, that stand before the Lord of the whole earth;" language which plainly implies personality, especially as it is given in explanation of a symbol, and therefore can scarcely be deemed symbolical itself. Hence the distinct reference which is made to the prophecy of Zechariah, where individuals, and not Churches, are so evidently intended, is a strong proof that the Apocalyptic witnesses are persons also.

The fact, however, that olive trees and candlesticks are in other passages of Scripture employed as symbols of Churches and not of individuals, might perhaps have some weight, were it not for the language of personality which occurs throughout the whole description here given of the witnesses. In the opening vision of the Revelation, where candlesticks are explained to signify the seven Churches, no language implying personality is employed; and it does not follow that because in one vision a candlestick was visibly exhibited to represent a Church, it must also signify a Church in another prophecy, where no candlestick was seen, but where the term was merely used in illustration of the office of two prophets, expressly so called, who are every where spoken of as individuals. The same remarks will apply also to the symbol of the olive trees; with this additional circumstance, that in the particular prophecy of the Old Testament, to which the allusion is manifestly made, the olive trees re-

present individuals, and cannot possibly denote Churches.

Thus it appears that these symbols, when employed in other prophecies to denote bodies of men or Churches, are always found in combination with circumstances so entirely different, that such prophecies cannot well be regarded as parallel to that now under consideration; nor can the evidence derived from this supposed parallelism, in favour of the symbolical interpretation, be reasonably deemed sufficient to destroy the natural signification of the language in which the two Apocalyptic witnesses are throughout described. Especially as there is nothing contrary to faith or reason in supposing, that in the latter times two prophets will be raised up in the Jewish Church, with miraculous powers similar to those once possessed by Moses and by Elijah, for the confirmation and support of the faithful; prophets, whose especial office it shall be to bear witness to the truth in the midst of that great tribulation spoken of by our blessed Lord, "such as was not from the beginning of the world, no nor ever shall be," and of which it is written, that "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved."^e

There is, however, another way in which the language of the prophecy may be understood with a symbolical interpretation. It may be said that the two prophets foretold are themselves symbols, the

^e Matt. xxiv. 21, 22.

representatives of Churches; and that a great persecution and ultimate deliverance of certain bodies or Churches of the faithful are represented under the symbol of two prophets, witnessing or prophesying in sackcloth, suffering martyrdom for the truth, lying dead in the streets of the city, raised again by the power of God to the amazement of their enemies, and ascending into heaven in a cloud in the sight of all men.

It must be remembered, however, that this is a mere hypothesis. The text of the prophecy contains no intimation that anything of the kind is intended; nor is there any explanation of the symbols given, as in other prophecies where symbols are employed^f. If, therefore, this view of the witnesses be correct, the only legitimate proof that can be given of it must be derived from the exactness with which the key supplied by such an hypothesis may enable us to explain the prediction. But this proof has not been afforded us. The expositions founded upon the supposition of a symbolical signification, are almost as numerous as the expositors; and it is not too much to say of them that they have wholly failed to convince the Church.

We may at once set aside all those interpretations which suppose the witnesses to prefigure inanimate or impersonal objects, as the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments^g, the Sacraments of Chris-

^f For example in Rev. i. 20. xvii. 7-18.

^g So the Homilies on the Apoc. attributed to Tychonius,

tianity, the Law and the Gospel, or the like. These interpretations have now but few advocates. It is manifest that they afford no satisfactory explanation of the phenomena of the prophecy, besides the antecedent improbability that persons should be employed as symbols of inanimate things.

But have the theories of modern expositors, now popular, been in reality more successful^b? Some

and published with the works of St. Augustine (tom iii. Append. edit. Bened.) Hom. viii. "*Et dabo duobus testibus meis, id est, duobus Testamentis.*"

Cornelius a Lapide gives the following classification of the opinions of commentators about the witnesses. 1. "Primo aliqui per hos duos testes non duos singulares viros, sed duo genera testium accipiunt." He instances in Pannonius, who makes them the Doctors and Preachers of the Church, "qui duo testamenta, scil. novum et vetus, docent et prædicant." Arias Montanus, who makes then the Law and the Prophets. The Calvinists, who interpret the witnesses of the Old and New Testaments, or the Holy Scriptures and the whole body of the faithful. Alcasar, who supposes them to be the wisdom and sanctity of the primitive Church, although he thinks Moses and Elias also to be prefigured. 2. "Secundo, qui hæc de temporibus, non futuris, sed jam præteritis, exponunt;" as Ubertinus and Michael Eitsinger, who suppose the two witnesses to be Christ and John the Baptist;

or Peter Aureolus, De Lyra, and St. Antoninus, who suppose Pope Sylverius and Menna, Patriarch of Constantinople, the great opponents of the Eutychian heresy, to be foretold; or, Ubertinus, who thinks that the prophecy may also foreshadow St. Dominic and St. Francis. 3. "Tertio, communis sententia aliorum est, hæc ad ultima mundi et Antichristi tempora pertinere." And here all are unanimous that Elias will be one of the witnesses. The other, some say, will be Jeremiah, some Elisha, some Moses, but the great majority (Corn. a Lapide himself included) are for Enoch.

^b It may be convenient to some readers to have a short synopsis of these theories.

According to Bishop Newton, the measuring of the temple, &c., predicts the Reformation; the inner temple and altar measured denote the purer part of the Church, who were preserved from Romish superstitions; the outer court and city denote the rest of the visible Church, which was trodden under foot by those who were "Christians only in

distant and general coincidences they no doubt exhibit, or else they would be destitute of even a

name, but Gentiles in worship and practice." The *holy city* therefore is the Christian Church. The witnesses represent all those who protested against the Popish corruptions, and "it is remarkable," says the Bishop, "that the principal reformers have usually appeared, as it were, in pairs, as the Waldenses and Albigenes, John Huss and Jerome of Prague, Luther and Calvin, Cranmer and Ridley, and their followers." [How *their followers* appeared in pairs is not explained.] He concludes that no two particular men, or Churches are intended, and that the meaning is that some in every age shall bear witness to the truth, although but few in number, and clothed in sackcloth, i. e. oppressed by neglect and persecution. *The fire proceeding out of their mouths*, is only a figure of the divine vengeance against which they forewarned the people: *and they smite the earth with plagues*, because the prophets are said to do, what they only predict or denounce; *they shut heaven*, that is God withholds His grace from all who refuse to listen to His true ministers. *The killing of the witnesses* denotes that they shall be degraded from all power and authority, deprived of all offices and functions in the state, and thus be politically dead. They shall lie in Rome, the city where our Lord is spiritually

"crucified afresh in the sufferings of His faithful martyrs." They shall be denied the privilege of burial literally, "which is the case of many Protestants, in Popish countries." They shall be raised again, by a voice from heaven, that is, by public authority, and they shall ascend into heaven, that is they shall again be admitted to civil honours and offices of the state :—[rather an odd notion of *heaven*, for a Christian to entertain, and yet this is one of the few points on which this class of commentators are nearly unanimous]. The remainder of the prophecy, according to Bishop Newton, is unfulfilled; and he is also evidently not quite satisfied with the allegorical interpretation, especially with the explanation given of the miraculous powers of the witnesses; for he adds, in reference to them: "But it is most highly probable, that these particulars will receive a more literal accomplishment when the plagues of God and the vials of His wrath (chap. xvi.) shall be poured out upon men, in consequence of their having so long resisted the testimony of the witnesses."

Faber and Cunningham agree substantially with Bishop Newton, in the interpretation of the *holy city*, the measuring of the temple, and the leaving out of the court and the rest of the city. In his earlier publications Mr. Faber defended the opinion, which Mr. Cunningham still

seeming plausibility. But in what sense can it be said that the primitive Church under the Pagan

maintains, that the rest of the prophecy was fulfilled at the Reformation, in the events which followed the dissolution of the Smalcaldic League. According to this view, therefore, the witnesses are Luther and his followers: their death took place when they were silenced by the Interim in 1548, and compelled to desist from preaching; their bodies lying unburied denoted the refusal of the rites of sepulture to Protestants; they were raised from the dead about three years and a half afterwards, when Maurice of Saxony, in 1551, took the field in defence of the Protestant religion, breaking up the Council of Trent, which did not again meet for ten years, and obtaining in the end the security demanded for the Protestants, first by the treaty of Passau, and afterwards by the Peace of Religion in 1555. "At the peace of Passau," therefore, according to Mr. Cunningham, "they ascended into heaven (i. e. into the symbolical heaven of the Government) by being legally established, and permitted, in common with the Catholics, and on an equal footing, to sit as judges in the Imperial Chamber. By the recess of the Diet of Augsburg, framed on the 25th of September, 1555, they were yet more firmly established in the political heaven." Dissert. p. 106. The great city where our Lord is crucified, Mr. Cunningham

tells us, "is, as all writers are agreed, the Roman empire." The beast by whom the witnesses are slain is also the Roman empire, or its secular head. The earthquake which followed their ascension, was the Reformation and the political events that accompanied it; [although one would think that this earthquake was felt before as well as after the year 1555]. *A tenth part of the city fell*, i. e. one of the ten kingdoms into which the empire was divided, viz., England, was rent from the Romish Church; [although England was not the only kingdom that received the Reformation, and even England had renounced the supremacy of Rome some twenty years before. Besides, the fall of a tenth part of the city by an earthquake certainly denoted the destruction of that part; but, according to this exposition of the symbol, the fallen and ruined portions of the city were more highly favoured than those parts which remained uninjured; and a mass of overthrown and shattered houses is to be regarded as a suitable symbol of a Church purified from superstition and false doctrine, and rejoicing in the purity of the Gospel. But these are trifles]. *Seven thousand men were slain*, that is, monastic orders were abolished in England; *the remnant was affrighted*, i. e. the beneficial effects of the Reformation were

persecutions, or the Church of the circumcision and the Church of the Gentiles, or the reformers of re-

felt even in the Papacy itself, and occasioned a great reformation of manners. But although the first beginnings of this earthquake appeared [contrary to what one would have expected from the text of the prophecy] long before the ascension of the witnesses, the final shock of it was not felt until the English Revolution in 1688, when England, according to Mr. Cunningham, was finally lost to Rome.

Mr. Faber, in his later writings, is of opinion that the two witnesses are the two Churches of the "Vallenses, and Albigenes;" who he maintains were the only two Churches of the West, which were "exempt from apostate idolatry during the *whole* term of the latter three times and a half, and which were *never* deceived or enslaved by the predicted man of sin." These two Churches *prophesied in sackcloth*, i. e. preached in the midst of persecution. *Fire proceeded out of their mouth*, i. e. they denounced extermination against the Romanists, as being the Babylonian harlot of prophecy. The other miracles are explained nearly in the same way as by Bishop Newton: they complete their testimony and are slain before the termination of the 1260 years, i. e. before they have ceased to prophesy in sackcloth: the beast by whom they are slain is the Roman empire; the city where our Lord was cruci-

fied is also the Roman empire. The war against them began by the edict of the 31st of January, 1686, by which the Churches of the valleys were "completely suppressed," but they revived again after three years and a half when Henri Arnaud recovered the valleys in 1689. They ascended into heaven June 4th, 1690, when the edict for their legal establishment as independent Churches was signed by the sovereign of the country; and they have ever since continued, still depressed and persecuted, to prophesy in sackcloth; in this state they will remain until the expiration of the 1260 years, which Mr. Faber thinks will terminate A.D. 1864. The earthquake is to take place "synchronically with the short period which comprehends the death and revival and the ascension of the two witnesses;" it denotes the Revolution of England in 1688, and the exclusion of Papists from every office spiritual, secular, or within the realm; seven thousand men, i. e. a complete and perfect number, being slain, or reduced to a state of political nonentity; and the Protestant remnant gave glory to the God of heaven. Sacred Calendar, vol. iii. p. 8, sq.

Mr. Elliott, in his late elaborate work on the Apocalypse, tells us that St. John, when called upon to measure the temple, &c., was the representa-

ligion in the sixteenth century, or the sects of the Albigenses and Waldenses, or the aggregate of all

tive of Luther and his fellow Reformers. The angel with the little open book (ch. x.) is a prediction of the Reformation; the measurement of the Temple, &c., denotes the regular constitution of the reformed Church, defining its communion by the doctrine of justification by faith, and excluding all who reject that doctrine as apostate and gentiles. The rod given to St. John represents the authority of civil magistrate given to the Reformers. The witnesses are those who in various ages have testified against Popery, viz., the Paulicians or (as this writer calls them) *Paulikians*, Petrobrusians, or Apostolicals, Publicani, Waldenses, Albigenses, &c., all of whom he defends from the imputation of heresy; these are represented in the prophecy as *two*, to signify that they were a sufficient, and no more than a sufficient number. So far this exposition does not essentially differ from that of Mede; who, however, considers the rest of the prophecy as still unfulfilled. Not so Mr. Elliott. The plagues inflicted by the witnesses, he tells us, denote the incursions of Saxons, Lombards, Saracens and Turks "that scourged the witness-rejecting world" (p. 698); their shutting up heaven indicates the spiritual drought or destitution of the Church; and the fire going out of their mouths the judgments of God, by which the persecuting na-

tions will ultimately be overwhelmed (p. 535). The Beast denotes the ten kingdoms of Western Christendom associated under the Papacy; the war against them commences when they have completed their testimony, i. e. when they have had time sufficient to have protested against all the successively developed points of Popish error, not when their testimony is drawing to a close. The war began at the Third Council of Lateran, A. D. 1179, and was carried on by the persecutions against the Waldenses, Hussites, Wickliffites, &c., ending in the silencing of these reformers, and the apparent suppression of all heresy. The city where their dead bodies lay, in which *figuratively* our Lord was crucified *afresh* [these words Mr. Elliott does not fear to add to the prophecy, notwithstanding the awful warning of ch. xxii. 18, 19.] is Rome; their lying dead and their enemies rejoicing over them, represent the Lateran Council A.D. 1512 to 1517, one of whose enactments was that the bodies of heretics should not be admitted to Christian burial, which our author considers as "a fulfilment to the *very letter* of what was predicted;" (p. 728). The interchange of presents among the enemies of the witnesses was fulfilled in the *golden roses* sent by the Pope to the principal sovereigns of Europe. Their making merry was

the sects of reputed heretics who resisted the growth of Popery in the middle ages,—in what sense can it

also accomplished in the splendid dinners given by the Cardinals on the close of the Council (p. 729). The resurrection of the witnesses was the Lutheran Reformation, which began by Luther's celebrated theses at Wittenberg October 31st, 1517, exactly three prophetic days (or natural years) and an half from May 5th, 1514, "the day of the ninth Session" of the Lateran Council (i. e. the day on which the ninth Session opened, p. 732). The heaven into which the witnesses ascended, is "the heaven of political power and dignity:" and "the *call*—the *loud* call—of summons from thence" "is a call from those highest for the time being in political authority" (p. 738). The earthquake is the separation of the Protestant kingdoms from the Papacy. The tenth part of the city that fell is England; "seven chiliads, names of men" (for so our author translates the clause), were killed in the city, i. e. "the seven Dutch united provinces were emancipated from the Spanish yoke, and at the same time the Papal rule and religion destroyed in them." The clause, "they gave glory to the God of heaven," is to be understood, not of the remnant who were affrighted, but of the witnesses who had ascended into Mr. Elliott's "political heaven," (p. 753). *Horæ Apocal.* Part iii. ch. vi.-ix.

This note has extended to such a length that no space remains for noticing other theories. As a specimen, however, of a different class of historical expositions, that of Bossuet may be briefly mentioned. The temple and altar, &c., represent the Society of the Elect; the court abandoned to the Gentiles, is the world outside the pale of the Church; they trample the holy city under foot, by persecuting the Church; the forty-two months are mystical, merely signifying that the persecutions of the Church have a fixed and limited period in the counsels of God. This number is repeated in different forms of days, months, times, &c., to shew that it is mystical, and not to be taken for a definite number. The *two* witnesses, or martyrs, intimate that in the Heathen persecutions, martyrs will be taken from the two orders of the Church, the clergy, represented by Jesus son of Josedec in Zechariah, the laity represented by Zorobabel. The fire proceeding out of their mouths, and the other miraculous powers of the witnesses, denote that punishment will ultimately overtake the persecutors of the Church. The words "when they shall have finished their testimony" indicate the persecution of Diocletian, the last effort of Paganism to destroy the Church. The Beast is hea-

be said that any of these have called down fire from heaven upon their enemies; have shut up heaven that it should not rain in the days of their prophecy; have been killed by the Beast, and left dead in the streets of Jerusalem for three days and a half; have risen again, to the confusion of their murderers; and have ascended in a cloud into heaven, causing great fear to fall upon all who saw them?

It is manifest that these various particulars of the prophecy can only be reconciled to the foregoing or similar theories by the further application of figurative interpretation: that "licentious and deluding art," as Hooker justly calls it, "which changeth the meaning of words as alchemy doth, or would do, the substance of metals, maketh anything of what it listeth, and bringeth in the end all truth to nothing¹."

For instance all these theories suppose the killing of the witnesses to be a *seeming* or *apparent*, and not a *real* death, even allowing the figurative use of the term, as signifying not literal death or martyrdom, but the extinction or suppression of a religious creed. Thus in the heathen persecutions of the primitive Church, Christianity was not really exter-

then Rome, under Diocletian, who conquered Christianity in appearance, and erected monuments of his victory as if the name of Christian had been destroyed. The martyrs lay dead, that is Christians were deprived by law of all honours, even of the rites of sepulture. The great

city where our Lord was crucified is the Roman empire. Their bodies lay but three days and a half, to shew the short duration of the persecution. The resurrection of the witnesses is the political establishment of the Church under Constantine, &c.

¹ Eccles. Polity, book v. c. 59.

minated, nor were all its professors put to death, but only in the vain hopes and imagination of the Gentiles. So also in the case of the Reformers, the Interim, which some suppose to have been the death of the witnesses, was not in reality the extinction of the reformed doctrines; and even if it was ever so regarded by the opposite party, it could only have been through a very great and palpable mistake. In like manner the Diocletian persecution of Christianity, the expulsion of the Vaudois from their valleys, or the supposed success of the Lateran Council in silencing all heretics, did not amount to the real suppression or extinction of the obnoxious sects, whatever might have been the boast or exultation of their enemies; and can we, therefore, think it a sufficient fulfilment of the prophecy to say, "the beast of the bottomless pit shall make war upon the witnesses and kill them,—that is, he shall not really kill them, but he shall only appear to the world to kill them^j; or he shall deceive

^j Thus Mr. Elliott, speaking of the state of things on the assembling of the Ninth Session of the Council of Lateran in 1514 says, "throughout the length and breadth of Christendom Christ's witnessing servants were silenced; they *appeared* as dead. The orator of the Session ascended the pulpit; and amidst the applause of the assembled Council, uttered that memorable exclamation of triumph,—an exclamation which, notwithstanding the long mul-

tiplied anti-heretical decrees of Popes and Councils, notwithstanding the yet more multiplied anti-heretical crusades and inquisitorial fires, was never, I believe, pronounced before, and certainly never since—*Jam nemo reclamat, nullus obsistit.*" Horæ Apocal. vol. ii. p. 726. Bossuet, who supposes the slaying of the witnesses to be the apparent extinction of Christianity in the Diocletian persecution, says, "[*La bête*] *les vaincra et les tuera*: en apparence.

himself into the belief, or endeavour from policy to persuade others to believe, that he had killed them, whilst in reality the witnesses are but stunned or fled; they have retired for a season from the conflict, soon to return to strike terror into their enemies by a seeming, not a real, resurrection?" The death of the witnesses in the prophecy, on the contrary, is spoken of as a true, a real death; their resurrection a real resurrection; and their ascension a real and visible ascension, which caused great fear to fall on all who saw it.

Time will not permit me to examine, at the length that would be necessary, the more minute particulars of these expositions, or to notice the forced and far-fetched analogies and misrepresentations of history to which they owe even the small appearance of plausibility they possess. It must suffice to have pointed out their manifest failure in the attempt to explain the prominent and essential characteristic of the prophecy; the real death, and actual resurrection of the witnesses. And the inference I would draw from this failure,—the failure, be it remembered, of piety and learning, and ingenuity, to explain the prophecy on the symbolical hypothesis,—is this, that the exposition which represents the witnesses

et selon le corps. Les choses viendront à un tel point, qu'à force de faire la guerre aux chrétiens, les Gentils croiront en avoir aboli le nom." Œuvres, tom. iii. p. 306. The prophecy however, speaks of a *real*, not an *apparent* killing of the wit-

nesses; and surely the enemies of the witnesses believing, or boasting, that they had killed them, when in reality they were still alive, can hardly be taken for a sufficient fulfilment of the prediction.

as the symbols of Churches or communities, is utterly destitute of proof or probability, and that we are, therefore, bound to return to the literal interpretation; to that interpretation which is no more than the plain and obvious meaning of the words, and which was once received with such singular unanimity in the Christian Church.

In the ancient Church the opinion was almost universal, an opinion obviously derived from the prophecy before us, that in the times of Antichrist, two prophets should appear with miraculous powers, such as are described in the prophecy, for the confirmation and support of the persecuted Church; that when they had fulfilled their mission, they should suffer martyrdom at the hands of their great and implacable enemy; that their dead bodies should be exposed in the streets of Jerusalem for three literal days and a half; that they should then literally ascend into heaven in the sight of their enemies, and that their ascension should be almost immediately followed by the second coming of the Lord, the destruction of Antichrist, and the triumphant establishment of Christ's everlasting kingdom.

So far it may be said that, until the commencement of the historical interpretations in the fourteenth century, the ancient Church was unanimous in the view that was taken of the prophecy before us. On a subordinate question, namely, who the two prophets will be, who are foretold under the name of the witnesses, some discrepancy certainly prevailed. Many thought that Moses and

Elias would again be sent, for the support and defence of the Church, with the same miraculous powers which they had possessed when on earth before: and this opinion received some apparent confirmation from the fact that Moses and Elias had appeared to our Lord at His transfiguration on the holy mount^k.

But by far the greatest number of the ancient Christians were of the opinion that the witnesses are Enoch and Elijah; who, having been both received into heaven, without tasting death, were believed to be reserved for this very purpose, that they may come again in the end of the world to prepare the Church for the second advent of our Lord; and being now, and ever since their translation, in the presence of God, they may fitly be described “as the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, which stand before the God of the earth.”

^k Matt. xvii. 3, Mark. ix. 4, Luke, ix. 30, 31. Mr. Burgh has recently defended this opinion. *Expos. of the Revel.* (4th Edit.) p. 213, sq. See also Maldonat. in Matt. xvii. 11. Mr. Govett objects, that it is appointed unto men *once* to die, and once only; that, therefore Moses, who has already once died, could not, a second time, suffer death; and, therefore, cannot be one of the witnesses, both of whom are to be slain by the Beast. *Exp. of the Apoc.* p. 160. It should be remembered, however, that those of the ancients who believed Moses to be one of the witnesses, maintained that he too,

like Enoch and Elias, had been translated without passing through death. This opinion was founded on the saying of Deut. xxxiv. 6, that no man knew the place of Moses's sepulchre; it appears to have originated with the Jews, and although seemingly contradicted by the plainest statements of Scripture (see Deut. xxxi. 14, 16, xxxii. 50, xxxiii. 1, xxxiv. 5, 7. Josh. i. 1), it has been received by several of the Christian fathers; see Hilar. Can. 20, in Matth. Hieron. in Amos. ix. 6. Ambros. De Cain et Abel. lib. i. c. 2. Gregor. Nyssen. in Vita Mosis. See Malvenda de Antichristo, lib. x. c. 12.

In these words, which occur both in the Apocalypse and also in Zechariah, the witnesses are spoken of as already “standing (העמידים) by the Lord of the whole earth.” They are not, therefore, two persons then, or even now, unborn, but two of the ancient prophets, who stand before God, or rather who were already standing before God, when Zechariah and St. John wrote; and this description can agree to none so well as to Enoch and Elijah. For we do not read of any other of the saints that they are as yet admitted into the presence of God; nor is there any reason to think that the faithful, before the resurrection of the body, will be, strictly speaking, in heaven. Of Enoch, however, it is written that “God took him;” and Elijah we are told “went up by a whirlwind *into heaven*,” Enoch, therefore, and Elijah, seem to be the only two of the human race of whom we can well suppose it to be said that they “stand before the God of the earth.”

¹ “To stand before God,” denotes an admission into His immediate presence, which does not appear from Scripture to have been vouchsafed to any mere man except Enoch and Elijah; it is the phrase used to express the peculiar privileges of the archangels, Luke, i. 19. Rev. viii. 2. Zech. vi. 5. Comp. Tobit. xii. 15; or of those who were singularly favoured. Matt. xviii. 10. It is used also in the Old Testament always to denote a peculiar privilege of admission to God’s presence or favour. Deut. x. 8, xxix. 10. 1 Sam.

vi. 20. 1 Kings, xix. 11. Jer. xv. 19, xxxv. 19. Comp. 1 Sam. xvi. 22. 1 Kings, x. 8. Luke, xxi. 36. Rev. xx. 12.

Nor do we read of the saints generally that they are in heaven prior to the resurrection of the body. Comp. Prov. xxx. 4. Rom. x. 6. This is said only of our Lord Himself and of Elijah. 2 Kings, ii. 1, 11. Mark, xvi. 19. Luke, xxiv. 51. Acts, i. 11, vii. 55. Heb. viii. 1, ix. 24. 1 Pet. iii. 22. John, iii. 13. Of David it is particularly said that that he is not in heaven, Acts, ii. 34.

In the case of Elijah, however, there is further evidence: for whether we regard him as one of the promised witnesses or not, it is certain from prophecy, no less than from the universal tradition of the Jewish as well as of the Christian Church, that Elijah is to come again^m. As it is written in the prophet Malachi, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curseⁿ."

In one sense indeed, and in so far as this prophecy related to the first coming of our Lord, it has already been fulfilled. St. John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elias; and our Lord has said of him, that he was Elias which was for to come^o. But the preaching of the Holy Baptist produced no effect upon the stony hearts of the generation to whom, if they had received him, he would have been indeed Elias. The desert in which he preached was, as it were, a figure of the people to whom his warnings were addressed; for, as our Lord has said, "they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed^p." The great work of the restoration of Israel, therefore, is reserved for a future and more complete fulfilment of the prediction; the great work of turning the heart of the fathers to the

^m For the testimony of the Christian fathers on the coming of Elijah, see Malvenda de Antichristo, lib. x.

ⁿ Mal. iv. 5, 6.

^o Matt. xi. 14.

^p Matt. xvii. 12, Mark, ix. 13.

children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, is reserved for the actual coming of Elijah himself; as our Lord has said, "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things^a."

I am aware that our Lord's conversation with His disciples on this subject is very commonly represented as if it had been His intention to assert that the coming of the Baptist was the only fulfilment of the prophecy of Malachi, and John the only Elias "which was for to come:" but a very brief examination of the passage will serve to convince you of the error of this supposition. The three favoured Apostles who had been with the Lord in the holy Mount, and who had there seen Him talking with Elias face to face, were evidently at a loss to reconcile the apparition they had witnessed, with the common interpretation of the prophecy, which placed the coming of Elijah *before*, not *after*, the advent of Messiah. They therefore referred the difficulty to our Lord, saying, "Why then say the Scribes that Elias must *first* come?" To which His immediate answer was, "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist." Here it is manifest that our Lord, even while He intimates that the prophecy had received a fulfil-

^a Matt. xvii. 11.

^r Matt. xvii. 10-13.

ment, in reference to His first coming, in the person of St. John the Baptist, does not condemn the opinion of the Scribes (which was likewise the tradition of the Jewish Church), that there would also be a literal coming of Elias. On the contrary, He distinctly affirms it, and has therefore given to it, by His sovereign authority, a sanction, which fixes it beyond a question in the belief of all faithful Christians.

Nor let it be objected that our Lord has elsewhere said of St. John the Baptist, "this is Elias, which was for to come:" for you will remember that when the Jews sent priests and Levites to the holy Baptist, to ask him "Art thou Elias?" he answered, "I am not." It is manifest, therefore, that although in one sense he was, yet in another sense—that sense in which the Jews had asked him the question, in reference to the fulfilment of the prophecy of Malachi,—he was not the Elias that was foretold. On no other supposition can our Lord's assertion that he is, and St. John's own assertion that he is not, the Elias, be reconciled; and we are therefore bound to believe that Elias will again come, not in figure or in similitude, but in person, "before the GREAT and TERRIBLE day of the Lord," to restore all things, to bring back the tribes of Israel to the faith of their fathers, and to the acknowledgment of their true Messiah; "to turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest the Lord smite the earth with a curse."

These are the grounds on which it was so generally believed in the ancient Church, that Elijah will

be one of the witnesses foretold in the Apocalypse ; for as the period of the witnesses will be but a short time before the third woe,—which, as we shall see, is the second coming of the Lord, in glory and majesty, to judge the quick and the dead, and to take possession of His everlasting kingdom,—so the period of the coming of Elijah is also immediately “ before the great and terrible day of the Lord.” The prophet Elijah, therefore, will be on the earth during the time assigned in prophecy to the apocalyptic witnesses ; and hence it is not surprising that the opinion that Elijah will himself be one of the witnesses should have been so widely and so generally received.

It must not, however, be forgotten, that this opinion is an inference only from a comparison of two prophecies, and not a revealed truth. At best, therefore, it is no more than a probable conjecture of divines, and is not altogether without its difficulties^s. For the office assigned by prophecy to Elijah is “ to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers.” This office, it is manifest, must be performed during his life-time, and therefore (if we suppose him to be one

^s I speak here of the opinion that Elias will be one of the witnesses foretold in the Apocalypse, not of the opinion that Elias will hereafter come “ and restore all things.” This latter I believe to be a truth expressly revealed by the prophet Malachi, and affirmed by our Lord Himself.

For a full and unanswerable defence of this truth, the reader is referred to an anonymous work, attributed to M. Alexis Desessarts, entitled “ *Defense du sentiment des SS. Peres et des Docteurs Catholiques sur le Retour futur d’Elie, et sur la véritable intelligence des Ecritures.*” 12^{mo}. (Sine loco.) 1737.

of the witnesses) before he is slain by the beast, or else after he is risen from the dead. But it does not appear that the testimony of the witnesses will have any visible good effect during their life-time, at least none which would seem to come up to the strong language of the prophecy of Malachi, or to our Lord's words, that Elias shall "*restore all things*:" and the interval between the resurrection and ascension of the witnesses may seem too short for any such result. Be this, however, as it may, it is not until after those events, it is not until an earthquake shall have shaken the city to its foundations, and destroyed seven thousand of its inhabitants, that great fear will fall upon them that shall see these wonders, and they will give glory to the God of heaven.

All, therefore, that can be with certainty affirmed from the prophecy is, that two prophets will be raised up within the Jewish branch of the Church, after the apostacy and rejection of the Gentiles, who will continue to prophesy, clothed in sackcloth, during the entire period of twelve hundred and sixty days, the period of Antichrist's dominion: that the last act of his tyranny will be to make war with these witnesses, and to kill them: that their dead bodies will lie unburied in the streets, amidst the rejoicings of the world, "because these two witnesses tormented them that dwelt on the earth;" that the witnesses, after three days and a half, will stand upon their feet, and will ascend into heaven, causing great fear to fall upon all who see them. Then shall follow, "in the very same hour," a great earthquake, in which a tenth part of the city shall be destroyed, and seven

thousand men shall perish: and the remnant shall be affrighted, and shall give glory to the God of heaven.

III. With these events the second woe terminates, and the approach of the third woe is announced as before to the apostle, "The second woe is past, and behold the third woe cometh quickly'."

' Rev. xi. 14. Comp. viii. 13, ix. 12. The assertion of the prophecy that the third woe shall follow *quickly* after the second, has occasioned great difficulty to our modern historical commentators. Mr. Faber, who makes the interval between the passing away of the second and the commencement of the third woe to be ninety-two years, argues thus: "*Long* and *short*, however, are comparative terms. Hence we may say, the *probable* interval between the end of the second woe and the beginning of the third, will be regulated and determined by the *known* interval between the end of the first and the beginning of the second. But an interval of more than five centuries elapsed between the passing away of the first, and the commencement of the second woe. The interval, therefore, between the passing away of the second and the commencement of the third woe is short only as compared to five centuries." Sacred Cal. vol. iii. p. 105. Mr. Cunningham makes a similar remark; "The word *quickly* seems to have a relative signification in this passage, and as we have seen that an interval of some centuries intervened between the end

of the first, and the beginning of the second woe, and also that the second woe continued for a space of three hundred and ninety-six years; if the third woe happen only one hundred years after the termination of the second, then it may be said to come quickly, inasmuch as it happens after an interval much shorter than that which separated the second woe from the first." Dissert. p. 116.

The ancients, reasoning from Dan. xii. 11, supposed that the interval between the destruction of Antichrist and the general judgment (which was then universally believed to be foretold by the seventh trumpet) would be forty-five days only. This opinion supposes the three prophetic periods of 1260, 1290, and 1335 days to have the same beginning. The witnesses are slain at the end of the 1260 days, but "the abomination that maketh desolate," i. e. Antichrist, continues for thirty days after they are slain, and consequently for twenty-six and a half days after they have risen from the dead. Then Antichrist is slain at the end of the 1290 days; but the conflict between the Church and her enemies is not finally determined

Accordingly the seventh angel, who had the third woe trumpet, immediately sounded, "and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever".

The third woe is therefore the second advent of Christ, and the establishment of His kingdom over the kingdoms of this world. And if any one should feel surprised that this event, so great and glorious, that to which the hopes of all Christians for ever tend, that for which the Church continually prays, should be spoken of as a woe to the inhabitants of the earth^v,

in favour of the former for forty-five days more; wherefore, the prophet says, "blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." St. Jerome, for example, thus expounds these words, "Beatus, inquit, qui interfecto Antichristo, dies supra numerum præfinitum quadraginta quinque præstolatur: quibus est Dominus atque Salvator in sua majestate venturus. Quare autem post interfectionem Antichristi, quadraginta quinque dierum silentium sit, divinæ scientiæ est, nisi forte dicamus, Dilatio regni sanctorum, patientiæ comprobatio est." See also Malvenda De Antichristo, lib. xiii. c. 8. It deserves the serious consideration of the reader, whether this exposition, which is in strict accordance with the letter of the prophecy, and was once almost universally received in the Church, is not, on the whole,

more worthy of our adoption than the laboured and unsatisfying conjectures of our modern controversial commentators.

"Rev. xi. 15. Instead of *ἐγίνοντο αἱ βασιλείαι*, Griesbach reads here *ἐγένετο ἡ βασιλεία*.

^v Mr. Faber urges this difficulty as an argument against the supposition that the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord denoted the conversion of the Gentiles to the obedience of Christ; because, he says, "How is it possible that the universal conversion of the Gentiles, or the inauguration of the Millennial Church, can be one of the three great woes, which are destined successively to afflict the inhabitants of the Roman earth; how is it possible, that an event, rapturously celebrated by the prophets as producing only peace and holiness and happiness, can be a woe, homogeneous

let him remember what our Lord Himself has said of it: "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and *then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn*, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory^w." In the prophets also, the Day of the Lord is spoken of as the day when "He will rise up to the prey"—when He will "assemble the kingdoms to pour upon them His indignation, even all His fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with His anger;" but the same prophecy which contains these fearful denunciations against the apostate nations, thus speaks to the people of God, "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all thy heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, He hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not see evil any more^x."

The event, therefore, which brings woe and mourning to the tribes of the earth, is joy and gladness to the Church of the redeemed. And, accordingly, the

in its nature and character to the two antecedent woes of the Saracens and the Turks?" Sacred Cal. vol. iii. p. 333. Doubtless the conversion of the Gentiles, if that was all that was predicted, could scarcely be called a woe; but Mr. Faber forgets that the sovereignty of the world cannot become Christ's, without the destruction of Antichrist and his followers, who will, at that time, be the vast

majority of the inhabitants of the earth; and, therefore, although to the Church the event is one of joy and triumph, yet the Lord's taking unto Himself His great power, and reigning, must bring death and destruction upon His enemies, and therefore will be indeed a woe "to the inhabitants of the earth."

^w Matt. xxiv. 30.

^x Zeph. iii. 8. 14. 15.

announcement that the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, is followed by the thanksgiving of the Church. The four and twenty elders, who are the representatives of the redeemed, "fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great: and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth'."

¶ Rev. xi. 17, 18. Notwithstanding the express declaration of this prophecy, that the seventh trumpet denotes the period wherein "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever," commentators are far from being unanimous in the opinion that the second Advent of the Lord is intended.

Bishop Newton, indeed, acknowledges that the third woe includes the destruction of the Antichristian kingdom, the full establishment of the kingdom of Christ, and the judgment of quick and dead; and he adds, "thus are we arrived at the consummation of all things, through a series of prophecies extending from the Apostles'

days to the end of the world." Diss. xxiv. According to Mr. Faber, however, we are now, and have been since the year 1789, actually living in the times of the third woe, which is to continue until A. D. 1865, and "the passage" (he says) "has not the slightest reference to the conversion of the Gentiles." *The Lord's taking His great power and exercising His sovereignty* denotes the judgments upon Popery and Mohamedism which began in the French revolution, and will continue until the battle of Armageddon. *The anger of the nations* also began at the French revolution in 1789, and will continue until the end. *The judgment of the dead*, for which the elders give thanks, denotes the judgment of the *figurative* dead, or

Here, it is important to remark, that the elders, in their song of thanksgiving, enumerate briefly those

the apostate Roman empire; an interpretation which Mr. Faber believes to be required "by the *decorum* of the imagery." *The recompense of the prophets, &c.* is a recompense of vengeance on the heads of their enemies. *The destruction of them that destroy the earth* is the battle of Armageddon, in the year 1865. *The opening of the temple in heaven* denotes the complete toleration of all religions introduced by the French infidel revolutionists into every Popish country which they subjugated. And *the lightnings, voices, thunderings, earthquake and hail* that followed, are only a brief description of the whole third woe from beginning to end. Sacred Calend. book vi. chap. iii.

Mr. Cunninghame thinks that "the awful blast" of the seventh trumpet "began on the 10th of August, 1792, when the French monarchy was overthrown;" but that "the *alarum* or *preludious blast* of the trumpet was sounded at the first shock of the revolution, in 1789." Dissert. (4th edit.) p. 122. He concludes further, that there are, "at least two different soundings of this trumpet" [although the text of the Apocalypse has mentioned but one], and that the last sounding of it will include the coming of the Lord and establishment of His kingdom, p. 124. Besides these, however, he gives in a note no

less than seven "*blasts*" of this trumpet (one being sounded every seven years since 1792) besides a "second septenary of the seventh blast" [not an eighth blast], sounded in 1841, and signifying "Sir Robert Peel's motion of want of confidence in the Whig Ministers," the formation of Sir Robert Peel's ministry, "the establishment of the Anglican Jerusalem Bishopric," and Bishop Alexander's "sailing for Palestine in the Devastation steamer, December 7, 24th Chisleu." It seems also that although the seventh blast of the trumpet is to be the last, yet there are to be septenaries of the seventh blast every seven years, until the end of time. And Mr. C. adds, "in like manner we conceive of the former trumpets, that they are not actually sounded through the whole period of each. They are analogous to the soundings of trumpets for the onset of the armed chivalry" (pp. 124, 125). Is the author of such reveries as these, gravely proposed as expositions of prophecy, to be dealt with as perfectly sane?

But this class of expositions is not confined to the moderns; the ancients found in the Apocalypse, by the same system of allegorical interpretation, the wars and revolutions of their own times, which then appeared to them as important as the French revolution, Sir Robert

glorious events connected with the second Advent of the Lord, which are afterwards more fully predicted in subsequent visions of the Apocalypse,

Peel's ministry, and the sailing of the steamer *Devastation*, appear now to Mr. Cunninghame. Petrus Aureolus, for example (A. D. 1319), supposes the seventh angel to be Narces, who overthrew the empire of the Goths in Italy; so that the kingdoms of this world (i. e. Italy) became the kingdoms of our Lord; who then came to judgment, to give reward to His saints, because St. Herculanus and other martyrs who were killed by the Goths, then received the honour of canonization. "Iste enim septimus angelus (he says) fuit Narces, quem Justinus misit ad reprimendum Totilam regem Gothorum, qui vocans Longobardos, auxilio eorum Regnum Gothorum delevit, et Italiam totaliter liberavit; qua liberatione factâ, Romana ecclesia et omnes Episcopi *dederunt gloriam Deo*, et liberé divinum officium cantaverunt: ideo subdit Joannes quod post tubicinium septimi angeli qui ad modum tubæ vocem exaltans plurimum exercitum congregavit: *Factæ sunt voces magnæ in cælo*, quia Regnum Italiæ extunc factum est Domini N. JESU Christi, et tunc venit tempus judicandorum mortuorum, et reddendi eis mercedem, quia S. Herculanus et cæteri martyres qui sub Gothis fuerant interfecti receperunt mercedem honoris a Christianis eos libere colentibus et adorantibus, Gothis interfectis." Breviar. Biblior., p. 368.

Ed. 4ta., Lovan. 1647. And the remainder of this exposition is in the same strain.

Mr. Elliott (who supposes the second woe to have terminated in 1794, when "a peace, dictated in terms by Prince Romanzoff, proclaimed to the world in language too clear to be mistaken, that the Turkman power was no longer a *woe* to Christendom") admits that the seventh trumpet includes the coming of Christ to judgment, although he struggles hard to introduce into it also "a *primary* woe," which "we may perhaps conjecture, by anticipation, to have been that of the not yet ended French revolution;" he confesses, however, "but this I cannot but say on the present occasion, that forasmuch as no *symbolic* characters are here referred to" [notwithstanding all that Mr. Faber has said about *homogeneity, decorum, &c.*] "by the *dead* mentioned we seem almost forced to understand the *dead* literally, by the *judgment* their judgment literally, by the *reward to the saints*, the reward elsewhere spoken of as to be *personally* communicated to them at Christ's coming." Horæ Apoc. vol. ii. p. 763. But how or why it is that the language of this prophecy is less symbolic than that of the two witnesses, for example, Mr. Elliott has not explained.

and especially in the twentieth chapter. The great event itself, for which they give thanks, is there spoken of as the reign of Christ with His saints, for a thousand years. To this, as a greater manifestation of God's power and kingdom than had ever before been given, the elders evidently allude, when they say, "because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned." The anger of the nations is next referred to by the elders; and this too is described in the twentieth chapter, as an event that is to succeed the thousand years, when Satan, as we are told, shall again be loosed, and shall go out "to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle^z." They mention also the wrath of God; "thy wrath is come," that is to say, the vengeance of God upon these apostate nations, and upon Satan that deceived them, which is more fully predicted in the twentieth chapter, where we read, "and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone^a."

The next event for which the heavenly elders give thanks is the judgment of the dead, and this too is described in the twentieth chapter: "and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was opened which is the Book of Life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in

^z Rev. xx. 8.

^a Rev. xx. 10.

the books, according to their works^b.” And lastly, the elders offer up thanks for the reward then to be given to the prophets and to the saints, and to them that fear the name of God, small and great, as well as for the destruction of them that destroy the earth. This reward of the prophets and saints is enlarged upon in the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of the prophecy, where we read of the new heaven and the new earth, the new Jerusalem, the river of the water of life, the tree of life, and the glory of the redeemed; “and there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be there: and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there: and they need no candle, neither the light of the sun: for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever^c.”

Thus we have been conducted by the double series of parallel prophecies, that we have now examined, the seals and the trumpets, to the same great event,—the final triumph and complete establishment of Christ’s kingdom, the great day of the Lamb’s wrath, the judgment of the ungodly, and the reward of the righteous.

We have seen also that the events predicted at the opening of the seals, are for substance the same as those foretold at the sounding of the trumpets; except that under the trumpets many important

^b Rev. xx. 12.

^c Rev. xxii. 3-5.

circumstances are revealed, which in the former prophecy had been passed over without notice. In particular the three woe trumpets make known to us facts of the deepest interest and importance respecting the future history and destiny of the Jewish branch of the Church, after the apostacy and rejection of the Gentiles, during the period immediately preceding the second Advent of our Lord.

In other visions of the Apocalypse, also, many portions of the great outline of prophecy thus sketched out, are filled up and expanded, and events which were at first but briefly and obscurely alluded to, are afterwards more fully developed and explained. For example, the star which fell from heaven, upon the sounding of the first of the woe trumpet, and by opening the bottomless pit, let loose upon the earth the armies of the Locusts, is spoken of again in the twelfth chapter, and more clearly shewn to be the great dragon, "that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." In the history of the witnesses also, under the second woe trumpet, we read of the Beast who shall make war against them, and overcome them and kill them. In the thirteenth chapter this Beast is minutely and particularly described. And lastly, the establishment of Christ's kingdom over the kingdoms of the world, the insurrection of the nations, the judgment of the dead, and the reward of the saints, events which were but briefly, and as it were incidentally alluded to in the thanksgiving of the elders, under the seventh trumpet,

are fully and particularly dwelt upon, in the twentieth and two following chapters of the prophecy.

To some of these supplementary visions, as far as they relate to our subject, I hope to call your attention in my next discourse. And I shall now only say, that as the preceding visions have, as I have endeavoured to shew, related principally, if not exclusively, to the Jewish nation, so in the visions that follow, although the Jews are still prominently the subject of them, yet the judgments that are to come upon the Gentiles, the apostacy of the Gentile Church, and the power and fall of Babylon, the citadel and metropolis of Antichrist, are also minutely predicted and described.

LECTURE VI.

Et quis tam tristem Ecclesiæ casum non multo magis præter-
iisse mallet, quam adhuc metuendum superesse? Sed non est ex
voto nostro interpretatio dirigenda : imo majori cum periculo in
partem istam quam e contra errabitur : plus siquidem ad pieta-
tem valet calamitatis futuræ expectatio, quam credula nimis de
ea quasi jam transacta securitas.—*Jos. Mede ; Comm. Apoc. in
cap. xi. 7.*

LECTURE VI.

REV. XII. 17.

“And the Dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

WE have now completed the consideration of the two great parallel visions of the Apocalypse, the vision of the seals, and the vision of the trumpets, in which, according to the views I have been endeavouring to recommend to you, the same events are foreshewn. Both begin with the wars and rumours of wars, earthquakes in divers places, pestilences, famines, and martyrdoms of the faithful, which our Lord had already foretold as the signs of His second coming ; and both conclude with that great tribulation, “such as was not since the beginning of the world, unto this time, no, nor ever shall be,”—a tribulation, from which the Church shall be delivered only by the appearing of our Blessed Lord Himself, and which shall be followed by the final overthrow of His enemies, the establishment of His kingdom, and the great day of the judgment of the quick and dead.

The next series of prophetic visions is, as I have already said, supplemental to the former^a; describing events which in the preceding visions had been either omitted, or but briefly alluded to, and thus, as it were, filling up the outline which had been before revealed.

The first of these supplemental visions extends from the twelfth to the end of the fourteenth chapter of the Apocalypse. In it St. John beheld a Woman, against whom, and against whose seed, a fearful Dragon makes war; two Beasts, one rising out of the sea and the other out of the earth, who combine together to persecute the saints, and ultimately obtain universal dominion over the world; the coming of the Lamb, with 144,000 of His chosen and peculiarly favoured followers; the judgment and destruction of the Beasts and their adherents; the blessedness of the martyrs, the reaping of the earth, and the treading out of the winepress of the wrath of God.

I. Our first business must be to collect together the particulars foretold in this vision.

1. There was first seen “a great wonder” or sign (σημεῖον μέγα) “in heaven;” namely “a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. And she, being with child, cried, travailing in birth, pained to be delivered^b.”

That this was a symbolical representation of some

^a This is very generally admitted by commentators; see Vitringa, p. 691; and Mr.

Elliott's *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, part iv. chap. i. p. 765.

^b Rev. xii. 1, 2.

remarkable fact or event, is the unanimous opinion of commentators, both ancient and modern. But with the admission that a woman, seen in heaven, "clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet," cannot be a literal woman, their unanimity is at an end. They are unable to decide whether the symbol be a description of events past or future; nay, they are not even agreed whether the events represented were past or future at the time when the symbol was exhibited to the Apostle. But we must bring together the remaining particulars of the vision before we can speak of its interpretation.

2. A second wonder (*ἄλλο σημεῖον*) was also seen "in heaven;" namely "a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." And this dragon, "whose tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth," was seen "to stand before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born^c."

3. The next event was the birth of the woman's child; "she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days^d."

4. The Apostle, or rather the vision that was vouchsafed to him, then goes back to explain the

^c Rev. xii. 3, 4.

^d Ver. 5, 6.

cause of the woman's flight into the wilderness. This was the war in heaven, in which "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon," and which terminated in the utter discomfiture of the latter; "and the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him^e."

This defeat of the serpent was followed by a voice in heaven, giving glory to God, because the accuser of the brethren was cast down, "which accused them before our God, day and night;" and also by a proclamation of woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, because the devil was come down unto them, "having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time^f."

5. Accordingly the manifestation of this great wrath of Satan is next described: "and when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child." To escape this persecution the woman fled into the wilderness: and her flight is spoken of as an event that was prepared in the Providence of God, and in which she was aided by the Almighty Himself: "and to her were given two wings of a great eagle; that she might fly into the wilderness *into her place*," which had been just before called "a place prepared for her of God" (ver. 6), "where

^e Ver. 7, 9.

^f Ver. 10-12.

she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent^g."

6. The escape of the woman, however, did not check or quench the wrath of Satan: he "cast out of his mouth," we are told, "water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood." But from this attempt to overwhelm her, whatever it may denote, the woman was delivered by a singular interposition; "the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth^h."

7. And lastly, after the woman had thus completely and finally escaped from the power of her implacable foe, his enmity to her continued undiminished: "the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christⁱ."

II. Such are the particulars of this great and mysterious prophecy: the phenomena, as it were, which we are now to consider, and, if possible, to explain. For this purpose let us endeavour to compare it with the visions that precede it, with which, as I have already said, I believe it to be parallel; and we may thus hope, not indeed to clear up all its difficulties, but to open the way perhaps to the right interpretation of it, and to the understanding of the great outline, at least, of those events, of which

^g Ver. 13, 14.

ⁱ Ver. 17.

^h Ver. 15, 16.

the Church, in this vision, is forewarned, and which He, who spake by the prophets, intended to make known to us.

1. In the first place, then, I would remark, that there are three important circumstances revealed in the account that is given us of the contest between the dragon and the woman.

First, although the woman was originally seen by the Apostle "in heaven," yet the prophecy takes for granted that after the birth of the man child who is "caught up unto God, and to His throne," she will be entirely on earth. This is evident not only from her flying "into the wilderness," but also because it was not until after the dragon "saw that he was cast *unto the earth*," that he persecuted the woman who had brought forth the man child. And it is remarkable also, that the water as a flood, which the serpent afterwards cast out of his mouth after the woman, was swallowed "*by the earth*."ⁱ

I would infer, therefore, that the scene of this vision is not that higher heaven, where was the throne of God, and the four and twenty elders, and the four beasts, in which was laid the scene of the former visions, but the lower heaven, where are the sun and moon and stars, in the midst of which the woman was seen by the Apostle: and that after her child was caught up from this lower heaven unto God and to his throne, the woman was found on earth; and therefore, as it would seem, no longer

ⁱ Rev. xii. 16.

clothed with the sun, nor having the moon under her feet, nor upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

Again, secondly, you will observe three distinct periods in the dragon's attempts against the woman^k. First, before the war with St. Michael and his angels, or, in other words, before he is cast out of heaven; and during this period he is represented as "standing before the woman, for to devour her child as soon as it was born." Secondly, after he is cast out of heaven unto the earth, and before the flight

^k Bossuet, who interprets this prophecy of the Diocletian and Maximinian persecutions, has particularly noted this threefold period, and undertakes to define it chronologically in accordance with his theory; he says, "On ne peut s'empêcher de voir ici dans la prophétie de Saint Jean, sous trois princes persecuteurs, trois temps principaux de la dernière persécution que souffrit l'Eglise, aussi distinctement marqués qu'ils sont dans l'histoire même. Le premier temps depuis le commencement en 303, jusqu'à l'édit favorable de Galère Maximien en 311. Le second, dans les nouveaux efforts de Maximin, repoussés par Constantin et Licinius, et finis enfin tant par la victoire de Constantin sur Maxence que par la mort et la rétractation de Maximin, an. 312, 313. Le troisième, quand Licinius, jusqu'alors très uni avec Constantin, attaqua l'Eglise, et périt,

an. 319, 323." *Oeuvres* tom. iii. p. 327.

According to Mr. Faber, the first of these periods comprehends all the persecutions carried on against the faithful, and particularly against the Albigenses and Waldenses, from A. D. 324, to the English Revolution at the end of the seventeenth century. The second period describes the progress of infidelity, including the French Revolution, during the eighteenth century. And the third contains all the efforts that may be made against the truth by its enemies, from the subversion of the infidel government of France to the year 1864. *Sacred Cal.* Book v. ch. 3.

Mr. Keith interprets the first period of the persecutions of the Church under Paganism, and the second of its persecutions under the Papacy: of the third period he says nothing. *Signs of the Times*, vol. ii. pp. 19-35.

of the woman into the wilderness; in which period it is only said of him that "he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child." And, lastly, after the flight of the woman, when he cast out of his mouth after her a flood of water, "that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood."

Thirdly, the only remaining circumstance to be noted in the history of the dragon is, that after the failure of this last attempt against the woman, he "went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

From this I think we must infer that the symbol of the woman, whatever we suppose to be signified by it, must denote something distinct from the faithful who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Christ; because they are not only here spoken of as different from the woman, but they are represented as within the reach of the dragon at the period predicted, whilst it is obviously implied that the woman will then be out of his reach.

This circumstance does not appear to have been satisfactorily explained by any of the popular expositors. A very brief review of the principal systems of interpretation will satisfy you of this.

First, then, there are some who tell us that the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord, is the woman here exhibited to the Apostle; and that her son is, of course, our Lord Jesus Christ, who was "caught up unto God and to His throne" at His ascension. But if the woman be the Blessed Virgin

personally, in what sense can it be said that she fled into the wilderness after the ascension of our Lord? and that she was there nourished for a thousand two hundred and threescore days? Or who are they of whom the prophecy speaks, as "the remnant of her seed," against whom the dragon directs his enmity, after she herself has escaped and is safe out of his reach? These are difficulties which the advocates of this interpretation do not attempt to meet; and it is only fair to add, that many of the divines who suppose the woman of the vision to be the Blessed Virgin, acknowledge that the prophecy is applicable to her, not in a strict or literal interpretation, but only by a panegyrical accommodation¹.

¹ Thus St. Bernard, in the celebrated sermon *De duodecim prerogativis B. V. Mariæ*, in which he applies this prophecy to the Blessed Virgin, says at the outset, "Putasne, ipsa [scil. B. V. Maria] est sole amicta mulier? Esto siquidem, ut de præsentis ecclesiæ id intelligendum prophetica visionis series ipsa demonstret; sed id plane non inconvenienter Mariæ videtur attribuendum. Nimirum ea est, quæ velut alterum solem induit sibi, &c." From which it is manifest, that although St. Bernard, infected as he unhappily was with the superstitious and idolatrous reverence for the Blessed Virgin that was then growing up in the Church, did not hesitate to apply to her in this discourse, even to the verge of blasphemy, such passages as "omnibus misericordiæ sinum aperit, ut de

plenitudine ejus accipiant universi," and although he proceeds to expound Rev. xii. of her glories and prerogatives, yet he distinctly admits, that he does so only as a panegyrical accommodation, and that the order and context of the vision would rather seem to intimate that the woman was a symbol of the Church, according to the generally received opinion.

The authority of St. Augustine, is also sometimes quoted for a similar application of the prophecy. And there is certainly a passage in one of the sermons *De Symbolo*, ad Catechumenos, attributed to him, where it is said, "In Apocalypsi Joannis apostoli scriptum est hoc, quod staret draco in conspectu mulieris, &c. . . . Draconem diabolum esse nullus vestrum ignorat, Mulierem il-

By far the greater number of commentators, therefore, understand by the woman the Christian Church, or some particular portion of the Church, in a state of persecution. Some are of opinion that the early persecutions, as, for example that under Diocletian, are intended^m. Others suppose the prophecy to describe the Church, at her elevation, as it were, into a political or terrestrial heaven, when Christianity became the religion of the empire under Constantine the Great; the subsequent persecutions by Pagans and Arians; the invasion of Europe by the Goths and Vandals, and the corruptions of religion from the middle ages to the present day. Others apply the prophecy more especially to the supposed Churches of the Waldenses and Albigenses, their preservation notwithstanding the persecutions to which they were exposed, and the infidel war waged

lam virginem Mariam significasse, &c." Opp. B. Aug. tom. vi. 965. A. Ed. Bened. Paris, 1837. But this sermon is now universally admitted to be spurious. The Benedictine editors say of it, and two others on the same subject, "Sequuntur alii de Symbolo sermones tres, Augustinum cui hactenus ascripti in ante editis fuerunt, haudquam nobis repræsentantes, sed oratorem genere dicendi, eruditione, et ingenio, multo inferiorum." This sermon is quoted as if it was the genuine work of St. Augustine, by several writers of note, amongst others by Cornelius a Lapide, who, never-

theless, admits that the application of this passage to the Blessed Virgin can only be made in the way of accommodation, and not as the literal meaning of the prophecy. Comm. in Apoc. xii. l.

In his genuine writings St. Augustine has interpreted the prophecy of the Church: "Hæc autem mulier," he says, "antiqua est civitas Dei, de qua in Psalmo dicitur, *gloriosa dicta sunt de te, civitas Dei*." &c. Enarrat. in Psal. cxlii. n. 3. Opp. tom. iv. p. 2264.

^m So Bossuet and his followers. See above note ^k.

against Christianity during the political revolutions of Europe in the eighteenth century. Others are of opinion that the Church is here represented, not at any one period of persecution, but in general under all the persecutions which she is destined to suffer, from the beginning of the Gospel to the second coming of the Lord. And lastly, some maintain that the particular persecution here foretold, is that which the Church is hereafter to sustain in the times of Antichrist.

It is evident that these interpretations do not account for the marked distinction drawn in the prophecy, between the woman and her seed. If the woman be the Christian Church, or any particular portion of the Church, it is true that they "who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ," may in an intelligible sense be said to be her children; but in what sense can it be said that the Church has fled into the wilderness, and thereby escaped the persecution of the dragon, although her members, or the pious and spiritual remnant of her members, are left behind, and exposed to the wrath of their enemy. And whether we suppose the primitive persecutions of the Church, under the heathen Emperors, to be intended, or the corruptions of the Church in the middle ages, as other writers contend, or any other season of persecution in times gone by, it will be equally difficult to explain from history in what sense it was that the dragon went to make war with the remnant of her seed, that is, with the faithful members of her

communion, after the Church herself had escaped out of his reach, and had found a refuge in a place prepared for her of God in the wildernessⁿ.

ⁿ The following is a summary of the interpretations given of this prophecy by the principal modern English commentators. According to Bishop Newton the woman is the Church: her pangs in labour represent the early trials and struggles of Christianity until the time of Constantine, whom she brought forth as her deliverer. The dragon denotes the Roman empire [notwithstanding that the prophecy distinctly declares him to be the Devil or Satan]; he seeks to devour the man child, i. e. the Roman Emperors kept a jealous eye over Christians from the beginning, and Galerius laid many snares for the life of Constantine. Constantine, however, was not only secured from these dangers, but caught up to the throne of God, i. e. advanced to the imperial throne; and made to rule all nations with a rod of iron. The war in heaven denotes the struggles of the heathen against the establishment of a Christian on the throne, which ended in the casting out of the dragon from heaven, i. e. in deposing heathens from all rule and authority; his angels were cast out with him, i. e. the heathen priests, officers, gods, and idols, were cashiered and destroyed. The persecution of the woman by the dragon, after he was cast unto the earth, denotes the attempts to overthrow Christi-

anity in the reigns of Constantine and Julian the apostate; the books written against it by the Sophists; and the Arian persecutions. The flood cast out of the dragon's mouth was the horde of barbarous nations, Goths, Vandals, &c., who invaded the Roman empire, but were swallowed up by the Romans, i. e. they submitted to the religion of the conquered Christians, and adopted the laws, manners, and the very name of Romans. This inundation of barbarians, the Bishop tells us, was "*before* the woman fled into the wilderness," [although the prophecy says expressly that the serpent cast the water out of his mouth *after* the woman]. The dragon making war with the remnant of her seed, implies that there shall then be only a *remnant* of true worshippers in the Church.

Mr. Cunninghame agrees with Bishop Newton, that the woman denotes the Church, but rejects the opinion that *the man child* is Constantine the Great. He prefers the suggestion of Mede, that the man child is Christ, formed mystically in His members; but he conceives the prophecy to have been fulfilled by the empire becoming completely Christian, or the final abolition of Paganism. The man child is caught up to God, to intimate the complete safety and protection vouchsafed to

2. Having stated these general objections to the popular interpretations, we may proceed now to

the Church in every age; or that the glorious reign of the saints was to remain concealed, until the destined period for the manifestation of the sons of God. He admits that this interpretation makes the woman and her offspring one and the same thing, viz., the Church; but he answers that in allegory [especially as interpreted by the popular commentators on prophecy] this is not uncommon. The dragon, he admits, is Satan, acting "through the instrumentality of the Roman empire." The war in heaven is prior to the flight of the woman into the wilderness, and denotes the triumph of the Gospel, in the overthrow of Paganism [i. e. it denotes the same thing as the gestation of the woman and the birth of her child]. Her flight denotes the corruptions of the Church, which withdrew or concealed her scriptural constitution, and she has dwelt in the wilderness from the period when the decree of the Emperor Justinian acknowledged the Pope as the head of the Church. The flood cast out of the dragon's mouth, and his war with the remnant of her seed, are interpreted by Mr. Cunninghame in the same manner as by Bishop Newton.

Against both these, and many similar expositions, Mr. Faber, in his later writings, objects that they rest upon the gratuitous assumption of a *prolepsis*,

by which the parturition and flight of the woman are made to precede the 1260 days, although the prophecy distinctly fixes her flight *at* the commencement of that period. And he adds very justly, "If such a mode of interpretation as this be allowable, we may produce anything out of anything." *Sacr. Cal.* vol. iii. p. 111, note. His own theory is this. The heaven in which the woman was seen is the visible western Church, limited to the Roman empire. The woman is a certain portion of that Church, namely its *faithful* worshippers. The dragon represents the *unfaithful* worshippers, or the secular powers of the Western Roman empire. His tail drew the third part of the stars, i. e. the bishops and clergy of the west, and cast them to the earth, i. e. caused them to apostatize, an event which he supposes to have occurred about A. D. 604. The birth of the man child denotes the separation of the "Vallensico-Albigensic Church;" and the man child is therefore identical with the two witnesses of the preceding vision. He is caught up to God, i. e. the Waldenses are protected from the fury of their enemies. The woman flies into the wilderness, i. e. the heaven in which she was originally seen, or the visible western Church, is transformed by apostacy into a barren wilderness. The war in

consider whether any other exposition can be found, more consistent with the text, and with former predictions of Holy Scripture.

heaven is a war in the visible western Church; and "the angels of Michael are mere mortal men;" from which it follows that "the angels of the dragon are mere mortal men likewise;" the war is therefore a struggle between a faithful priesthood on the one hand, and an apostate priesthood on the other; in a word, it denotes the persecutions against the Albigenses and other reputed heretics of the middle ages, down to the period of the English revolution, at the end of the 17th century. The persecution of the woman after the devil is cast down to the earth, denotes that he no longer, as in the middle ages, employs against her the accusation of heresy, but commences a regularly organized attack by the principles of infidelity. This took place during the 18th century and was consummated in the French Revolution, which is foretold under the emblem of a flood cast out of the dragon's mouth. But *the earth helped the woman*, i. e. the Roman empire resisted the anarchical and atheistical principles of the conspiracy, and its advocates sunk into contempt. The war with the remnant of her seed is still going on, and will continue to the end of the 1260 days, i. e. until A. D. 1864. [It will be seen that this interpretation does not explain how the woman is

nourished in the wilderness in the place prepared for her; nor does it shew how she is out of the reach of the dragon, or who are meant by "the remnant of her seed." The war now going on against the Christian religion, is surely directed against *the woman*, i. e. against the faithful worshippers in the Church, as Mr. Faber explains the symbol, and she is as much exposed to that war as any remnant of her seed].

According to Mr. Elliott (*Horæ Apoc.* Part iv. ch. i. ii.) the woman represents the Christian Church of the 4th century, elevated to "the political heaven" of civil ascendancy; the period is fixed by the expiration of forty weeks (the natural period of gestation), counted on the day-year theory from our Lord's ascension, which brings us to A. D. 313 (i. e. 280 years from A. D. 33); the Dragon denotes the old Roman Pagan power; which was cast from heaven to earth, by the victory of Licinius over Maximin, April 30, 313; the birth of the man child, who was caught up to heaven, denotes the elevation of Constantine to an avowedly *Christian* throne, and his ruling the Pagans with a rod of iron, the discountenancing of all Pagan rites, and finally interdicting them under the severest penalties. The war in heaven denoted the seduction

And first, I would observe that the woman, seen by the Apostle in the vision, must denote, not the Christian Church, for the reasons already suggested, but the Jewish nation.

This interpretation is in strict accordance with the language of the Old Testament, in which Israel is frequently spoken of under the emblem of a woman; and it is also remarkable, as tending to explain the symbols employed in the prophecy, that

of Licinius to head afresh the dragon's cause against Christianity, and the consequent final dejection of Paganism, A. D. 324, from its high places in the empire. The song of victory in heaven on the fall of the dragon, denotes the re-opening of the Christian churches, and the liberty enjoyed by Christians in divine worship, and in particular the thanksgiving offered up by them for the fall of Paganism. The woe denounced (ver. 12) predicts the Gothic scourge. The persecution of the woman by the dragon, after he was cast down from heaven, (ver. 13), denotes his *direct* attack on vital Christianity by Arianism, and his *indirect* attack by superstition. The woman's flight towards the wilderness denotes the concealment of the spiritual Church, in the midst of a corrupt visible Church, which had become, as it were, a wilderness. The "two wings of a great eagle" given to the woman to enable her to fly into the wilderness, denote the union of the two wings of the empire, the Eastern and

Western, under Theodosius the Great, who applied his powers to the protection of the Church, and the suppression of Arianism. The flood cast after the woman, denotes the invasion of the empire by the Vandals, Goths, Huns, Visigoths, &c., who were either Pagans or Arians, and thus brought with them also a flood of false doctrine. But these false doctrines, Pagan as well as Arian, were gradually absorbed, by the invaders having ultimately adopted the orthodox religion of the empire: thus "the earth helped the woman, and swallowed up the flood." The woman remains in the wilderness 1260 years, i. e. the true spiritual Church remains invisible for that period in the midst of the Romish apostacy. The "remnant of her seed" are the witnesses, who during this long season stand up for Christ, and on whom the dragon makes war. [But is not the aggregate of such witnesses identical with the spiritual or invisible Church, represented by the woman?]

the dispersed and rejected state of the Jewish nation is represented by the prophets under the emblem of a barren woman. The prophet Isaiah, for example, thus predicts the restoration of Israel from her dispersion. "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." And again, "For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer°."

These passages are sufficient to shew that the emblem of a woman, as a figure of the Jewish people, was already familiar to all who were acquainted with the ancient prophecies. And if by the barren and deserted state of a forsaken wife, were portrayed the rejection of Israel, and the wrath which

° Is. liv. 1, 3, 6-8.

caused the Lord to hide His face from her, we may perhaps fairly infer, that the sign of the woman "travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered," would denote the removal of that wrath, and the reception of Israel once more, into the favour and covenanted love of God.

But there is another prophecy of Isaiah more distinctly parallel with the mysterious vision we are considering. It begins by describing the rejected state of the Jewish nation, when "he that killeth an ox, shall be as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol." It speaks also of a remnant, in the midst of the nation, persecuted by their brethren, to whom the coming of the Lord will bring joy and deliverance: "hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at His word: your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed. A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord, that rendereth recompense to His enemies." This is in accordance with all that is revealed to us of our Lord's second coming, which will be preceded, as all Scripture testifies, by a season of persecution to His saints, and of vengeance upon His enemies.

The prophecy goes on to speak of the restoration of Israel in the following language: "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she

was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or, shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth and not cause to bring forth, saith the Lord; shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God. Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her; that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her, like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream; then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforteth so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem^p."

Here it is beyond a doubt that the prophet, under an emblem exactly similar to that of the Apocalyptic vision,—a woman in travail, who was delivered of a *man child*,—predicts a future restoration of Jerusalem, and a return of the Jewish nation to her

^p Is. lxvi. 1–13. The principal difficulty in the way of supposing this prophecy to be parallel to that in the Apocalypse is, that in Isaiah it is said "*before* she travailed she brought forth;" whereas in the Apocalypse, the woman was seen in travail and pained to be

delivered, before her child was born. But the word in the original is *הָיָה*, which, when followed by a future, often signifies *nondum*; and that it is not to be here taken strictly in the sense of *before*, is evident from ver. 8: "*as soon as* Zion travailed," &c.

allegiance. We may, therefore, reasonably conclude that the same event is foretold also in the Revelation; that the woman clothed with the sun, the great sign seen in heaven, is the nation of Israel, at the period of her future promised glory, when she shall be no longer in barrenness, but the joyful mother of children^a; when, to use the words of Isaiah, “she shall forget the shame of her youth, and shall remember the reproach of her widowhood no more^r,” and when that gracious promise shall be fulfilled to her, “whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations^s.”

The next portion of the prophecy, however, presents difficulties which I know not how to solve, and of which no system of interpretation, with which I am acquainted, appears to me to have furnished any sufficient explanation.

Supposing the woman to signify the Jewish nation, at the period when she shall be again remembered by her Maker and her husband, and when she shall be either restored, or about to be restored, to the land of promise, what are we to understand by the man child who is born to her, and why,

^a The same view of this prophecy has been taken by Lacunza (*Coming of Messiah*, part ii., *Phen.* viii.) and by Mr. Burgh, who have also both quoted *Gen.* xxxvii. 9, as a proof that the sun, moon, and twelve

stars, with which the woman in the vision was surrounded, point her out as emblematical of the Jewish people.

^r *Is.* liv. 4.

^s *Is.* lx. 15.

or in what sense, is that man child caught up unto God and to His throne, as soon as he is born?

Let us, at least, endeavour to understand the difficulties of this question.

The man child is said to be one "who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron." This, as you will remember, is one of the characteristics of the Messiah Himself. "Ask of me," are the words of the Father to the Son, in the second Psalm: "ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession; thou shalt break them (תרעם),"—or rule them, as the word may also signify—"with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." And elsewhere in the Apocalypse, it is said of our Lord in His second coming, "and out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." There is, however, another passage of the Apocalypse in which our Lord has promised to communicate this privilege to his faithful followers: "he that overcometh," He says, "and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my Father."

¹ Ps. ii. 8, 9. *Vulg.* Reges
eos. LXX. ποιμανῖς αὐτούς.

^u Chap. xix. 15.

^v Chap. ii. 26, 27.

There are, therefore, but two interpretations of this part of the prophecy that are capable of being reconciled with the words just quoted. First, that the man child brought forth by the woman, is our Saviour Christ Himself; and secondly, that the symbol denotes, not Christ, but those to whom Christ shall communicate the privilege of ruling the nations with a rod of iron, whatever that privilege may import.

On the former of these interpretations the Jewish Church may be said to bring forth Christ, when, after many ages of widowhood and barrenness, she receives Him by faith, and acknowledges Him as her Lord and Saviour^w.

On the second interpretation she may be said to bring forth a man child, who shall rule all nations with a rod of iron, when there is gathered from the midst of her a remnant upon whom, according to our Lord's promise, that privilege shall be conferred.

But these interpretations appear to me to afford no clear or satisfactory explanation of the clause in which we are told that the child was "caught up unto God, and to His throne^x."

^w This is the opinion of Lacunza, (*Coming of Messiah*, part ii. Phen. viii.) Mr. Burgh supposes the expectation of the second coming of Christ formed in the hearts of the Jewish people to be intended by the travail of the woman: and therefore that the actual coming of Christ is typified by the *birth* of the man

child. *Exposit. of the Revel.* p. 230.

^x According to Lacunza this part of the prophecy signifies that as soon as the man child is born (that is, as soon as Israel has confessed the faith of Christ), the Son of God, thus brought forth by His ancient people, will be "caught up to

The more plausible, perhaps, is that which supposes the man child to signify a remnant of the Jewish nation, which shall rule all nations with a rod of iron; and his being caught up to God, will then denote a still further privilege, which will have the effect of placing this favoured remnant far above, out of the reach of the dragon who is watching for their destruction.

And such a remnant, we have already learned from this sacred book, shall be chosen out of the Jewish people in the latter times, and sealed with the seal of God in their foreheads. We know also that the virtue of that seal will be sufficient to protect them against some at least of the judgments that are coming upon the earth: for the locusts, you will remember, who came up out of the smoke of the bottomless pit, were not permitted to hurt this chosen remnant, but only those men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads; and in another place

the throne of God," i. e. presented before the Ancient of days, according to Daniel's prophecy (Dan. vii. sq.), and "a dominion, and glory, and a kingdom" given Him, "that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him."

According to this view our Lord does not receive His kingdom, in the fullest sense of the word, until Israel has brought Him forth by faith; nor are His enemies until then made His footstool (Heb. x. 13). The coming of His kingdom, therefore, is that which is signified

by the man child being caught up unto the throne of God.

This, however, seems to make one part of the prophecy, namely the birth of the man child, figurative, and the remainder literal. Nor does the word "caught up" (*harpagēn*), seem very properly applied to His being brought before the Ancient of days, as in the prophecy of Daniel referred to, especially when we remember that Christ now sitteth at the right hand of God, and that *from thence* He shall come again to judge the quick and the dead.

this chosen multitude of the sealed are spoken of as *before the throne* of God ;—" they sung, as it were, a new song *before the throne*, and before the four Beasts, and the elders;" and again, "and in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault *before the throne of God.*"

But although this interpretation is, perhaps, more consistent with itself and with the words of the prophecy, I am far from regarding it as complete, or, to my own mind, entirely satisfactory. Our knowledge of the prophecies, which speak of the last days of the Church, is as yet in its infancy; we have hitherto been studying them upon a wrong hypothesis, seeking, as it were, the living among the dead, and labouring to adapt fanciful and far-fetched fulfilments to predictions which are unfulfilled. It need not, therefore, excite much wonder that many things should long remain obscure and unintelligible to us, still less should we hesitate to acknowledge the difficulties that oppose us, or blush to confess our doubts and ignorance.

3. There are, however, some things in the prophecy we have been considering, which, if I mistake not, are clear and indubitable.

(1.) I have already had occasion to notice the fact that after the dragon, who is expressly called the Devil and Satan, is cast out of heaven into the earth, he is represented as persecuting with great wrath, the woman who had brought forth the man child. And after the woman had escaped into the wilderness, he turns his fury against "the remnant

of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

The duration of the former of these persecutions is not specified, but the duration of the latter may be inferred from the statement that the woman shall be nourished in the wilderness "for a time, times, and half a time," or, as the period is otherwise expressed, for a thousand two hundred and threescore days, or three years and a half⁷.

This is the very same period during which, as we learned from the last vision, the holy city is to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, and the witnesses are to prophesy in sackcloth against the impiety and profaneness of the times.

It is certain, therefore, that the flight of the woman into the wilderness, whether it be the consequence, or not, of the profanation of Jerusalem by the Gentiles, is, at least, a contemporary event. And if, as we have seen, the persecution raised against the Jewish people by the army of locusts described in a former prophecy, is immediately to precede the treading down of the holy city by the Gentiles, then we may probably infer, that the locusts must synchronize with the persecution of the woman by the dragon, after his fall from heaven, and before the flight of the woman into the wilderness.

All this agrees exactly with the hypothesis that the woman is a symbol of the nation of Israel; and the prophecy, on this view of it, will signify, that

⁷ Rev. xii. 6, 14.

after the occupation of Jerusalem by the Gentiles, the great mass of the Jewish people will be compelled to evacuate the promised land, and will be preserved, by some singular providence, in the wilderness "where she hath a place prepared for her of God," and where she shall be nourished, safe from the power of her enemies, during the whole continuance of the persecution.

I would remark also that this interpretation of the flight of the woman, receives some confirmation from our Lord's prophecy, where he says: "When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand): then let him that is in Judæa flee into the mountains: let him which is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes^{*}." And the same command is thus otherwise expressed by St. Luke: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee into the mountains, and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them which are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled^a." Here then we learn that at the period to which we have supposed these prophecies to refer, when the

^{*} Matt. xxiv. 15-18.

^a Luke, xxi. 20-22.

Gentiles shall tread down the holy city, and the abomination of desolation shall stand in the holy place, there shall be a flight from Judea, as well as from Jerusalem, into the mountains, occasioned by the urgent and overwhelming pressure of some sudden danger, such as is indicated in the Apocalyptic prophecy, "and the dragon cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood".

(2.) I would observe farther, that the prophecy supposes a remnant of the woman's seed to be left exposed to the fury of the dragon, after the flight of the woman; and it describes this remnant as consisting of those "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ".

To this circumstance also we have a parallel in the prophecy of the witnesses; in which, you will remember, it was distinctly implied that there shall be such a remnant, and that notwithstanding the profanation of the outer court, and of the holy city, the temple itself and the altar shall be preserved from destruction at least, if not from pollution, and that even in those fearful days of trial, there shall not be wanting some to worship therein^d.

^b Rev. xii. 15.

^c Ver. 17.

^d In the prophecy of Zechariah (Zech. xiii. 1.) we read that "in that day," the day, namely, which is described ch. xii. and which is manifestly the day of the restoration of Israel (comp. xii. 10.), two-thirds of the nation

shall be cut off: "And it shall come to pass that *in all the land*, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein." Out of this third part shall be chosen a remnant, such as is spoken of, Rev. xii. 17; "And I will bring the third part

4. One difficulty of some interest and importance still remains. Why, it may be asked, is the woman seen at first in heaven, and why, after her child is caught up unto God and to His throne, is she represented and spoken of as on earth? If the woman be the Jewish nation, what can be meant by her being in heaven before the birth of her child, and afterwards on earth?

This difficulty I do not pretend to solve; it is, in

through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God." Immediately after we read that one half of the city shall go into captivity: "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken, &c., and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." (Zech. xiii. 8, 9. xiv. 1, 2). Here then is a prophecy, apparently parallel to the vision of the woman. The Jewish nation, travailing and pained, at length brings forth a man child, or in the language of Zechariah, a third part of all the land is refined as silver, when the Lord will call his people. A remnant also of the people is preserved in Jerusalem, in the midst of war and carnage, whilst one-half of the city shall go into captivity, events which may perhaps be represented by the

flight of the woman into the wilderness, leaving behind her a remnant of her seed exposed to the assaults of Satan; in which case her captivity may become the providential means of her preservation in a place prepared for her of God.

In Hosea there is a prophecy, in which, after describing the rejection of Israel and her whoredoms, her restoration to the Divine favour is thus foretold: "Therefore behold I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall sing there as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi, and shalt call me no more Baali." Hos. ii. 14-16; compare also Ezek. xx. 35-38, and see Mr. Burgh's remarks on these parallel prophecies. Expos. of the Revel. p. 242, sq.

fact, a part of the other great difficulty of this prophecy, of which I have already spoken, and cannot probably be fully or satisfactorily resolved, until we can say with certainty what is meant by the birth of the man child, and what by his being caught up unto God.

III. A very few general remarks on the remainder of this vision must now suffice.

We have seen that upon the flight of the woman into the wilderness, "the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed."

The circumstances of this war are next detailed; the instruments by which it shall be carried on, and the limits within which it shall be restrained by the protecting Providence of God over His Church.

The instruments employed by the dragon, in this his great wrath against the woman and her seed, are represented to the Apostle under the figure of two Beasts, of which one was seen to rise up out of the sea, and the other out of the earth.

1. The first of these Beasts is described as "having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." His body also, we are told, "was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion."

Now it is remarkable that the dragon, when he was first seen by the Apostle, was seen with the same number of heads and horns as this Beast; but

the crowns of the dragon were upon his heads, and were, therefore, but seven in number, whereas the crowns of the Beast were on his horns, and were, therefore, ten^e.

This circumstance evidently denotes some close and mysterious connexion between the dragon, who is expressly said to be the Devil and Satan, and the Beast here exhibited to the Apostle: and this is indeed expressly stated in the prophecy, for we read: "and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority^f."

The prophecy goes on to describe the character and actions of this formidable enemy of the truth and of the people of God.

First, it is expressly revealed that he shall establish a system of idolatry over the whole earth, the objects of idolatrous worship being the dragon and the Beast himself. "And they (i. e. all the world) worshipped the dragon, which gave power unto the Beast; and they worshipped the Beast, saying, who is like unto the Beast? who is able to make war with him^g?"

A second characteristic of the Beast is blasphemy of the most awful character. "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies;" "and he opened his mouth in blasphemy

^e Chap. xii. 3. The common explanations given by commentators of this circumstance seem particularly unsatisfactory. See Faber, *Sacr. Cal.* vol. iii. p. 114. Cunninghame, *Diss.* p. 131. El-

liott, vol. ii. p. 774, who is still more obscure than his predecessors.

^f Chap. xiii. 2.

^g Ver. 4.

against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven^h."

We are further told, thirdly, that "it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them;" and you will remember that in the prophecy which was the subject of my last discourse, it was said of the witnesses, that the Beast "shall make war with them, and shall overcome them and kill them."

Fourthly, the duration of his persecution of the saints is limited; "power was given unto him to continue," or according to another reading, which our translators have preserved in the margin of our English Version, "power was given unto him to *make war*, forty and two months."

This fixes the appearance of this Beast to the same chronological period in which, as we have seen, the holy city shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, and the woman preserved in the wilderness from the face of the Serpent. And we may infer, that, at the end of this time, the Beast shall himself be destroyed and killed with the sword; for it is added, "he that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saintsⁱ."

It follows from these characteristics of this great enemy of the saints, that the power foretold must be identical with that predicted under the emblem

^h Ver. 5, 6.

ⁱ Ver. 10.

of the little horn, in the prophecies of Daniel. For they coincide, as you will perceive, in their actions and in their duration; both being characterized by idolatry, blasphemy against God, and persecution of the saints: and both being in existence for the same limited period of "a time, and times, and the dividing of a time," or, as it is expressed in the Apocalypse, for forty and two months, or three years and an half.

I would observe also, as another proof of identity between the two prophecies, that the especial enmity, both of the little horn of Daniel and of the Apocalyptic Beast, will be directed against the Jewish people. This is evident from the prophecy before us, if we admit the woman who has fled into the wilderness to be an emblem of Israel, because it was with the remnant of her seed that the dragon made war; and the Apocalyptic prediction that the Beast shall make war with the saints, and overcome them, will, therefore, evidently be identical with Daniel's prophecy, that the little horn shall "wear out the saints of the Most High," and that "they shall be delivered into his hands." But in Daniel, as I have endeavoured, on a former occasion, to prove^j, "the saints" must signify the people of Israel; in the Apocalypse, therefore, the word may perhaps have the same signification, and thus the prophecy will intimate that the blasphemous power or potentate

^j Lectures on the prophecies relating to Antichrist in the writings of Daniel and St. Paul, pp. 159, 160.

who is foretold, shall, in an especial manner, direct his enmity against the Jewish nation.

2. Another of the instruments employed by the dragon in his warfare against the seed of the woman, is represented under the emblem of a second Beast, who was seen by the Apostle to come up out of the earth.

Of this Beast it is said that he had "two horns like a lamb," and that he "spake as a dragon^k;" and he is elsewhere called "the false prophet^l."

His character and actions are thus described in the vision before us.

First, his power is coordinate with that of the first Beast: "he exerciseth *all the power* of the first Beast before him," i. e. in his presence, or before his face.

Secondly, he shall have power to work miracles. "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the Beast^m."

This is in exact accordance with other prophecies. Our Lord, you will remember, tells us that false Christs and false prophets shall arise in the latter days, who shall shew "great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very electⁿ:" and St. Paul has

^k Ver. 11.

^l Chap. xix. 20, xx. 10.

^m Chap. xiii. 13, 14.

ⁿ Matt. xxiv. 24.

foretold that the coming of the man of sin shall be "after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish^b."

Thirdly, it is further stated that the object of the miracles performed by this second Beast shall be to promote the idolatrous worship of the first Beast; "he causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first Beast, whose deadly wound was healedⁱ." To this end he shall set up an image of the Beast, to which, by his miraculous power, he shall give life: "saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the Beast, which had the wound by a sword and did live: and he had power to give life unto the image of the Beast, that the image of the Beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the Beast should be killed^j."

Fourthly, he shall also impose "a mark" upon all the followers of his idolatry, to be impressed upon their foreheads, or upon their hands; and this mark shall be closely connected with that commercial character, which, as we learn from a subsequent vision, shall be one of the distinguishing features of the kingdom of the beast, "And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark (*χάραγμα*) in their right hand, or in their foreheads; *and that no man might buy or*

^b 2 Thes. ii. 9, 10.

ⁱ Rev. xiii. 12.

^j Ver. 14, 15.

sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name^k."

Time will not permit me to enter now into a more minute consideration of these particulars of the prophecy—for which it would be necessary to compare it with the prophecy of Babylon, given in a subsequent vision ;—nor to examine the popular interpretations of it, with a view to convince you of their unscriptural character and insufficiency.

At present, therefore, I shall only make two or three general remarks.

First, that the second beast shall exist contemporaneously with the first. This is evident from what we read, that he shall exercise "all the power of the first beast *in his presence*," *ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ*, and that he shall have power to do miracles "*in the sight of the beast*," *ἐνώπιον τοῦ θηρίου*. We learn also from another passage of the Apocalypse, that these two beasts shall perish together by the same doom ; "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone^l."

Secondly, I would further observe that the power or dominion of these beasts will be chiefly exercised among the Gentiles.

Of the first beast, it is said that, "power was

^k Ver. 16, 17.

^l Chap. xix. 20.

given him over *all kindreds, and tongues, and nations*; and all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world^m." And so also of the second beast we read, that he shall cause "*the earth* and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healedⁿ."

Thirdly, the deliverance of the Church from the power of these formidable foes shall be reserved to our Lord Himself; who, as St. Paul has foretold, shall "consume the wicked one with the Spirit of His mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of His coming^o."

This is represented in the next scene of this vision, where the apostle beheld "a Lamb standing on Mount Sion, and with Him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having His Father's Name written on their foreheads."

Of these chosen and favoured followers of the Lamb I have already spoken, and therefore, it is only necessary now to say, that the coming of the Lord "with ten thousand of His saints," which this part of the vision represents, shall be followed by the preaching of the everlasting Gospel to "them that dwell on the earth," according to our Lord's prediction, "and this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come."

^m Chap. xiii. 7, 8.

ⁿ Ver. 12.

^o 2 Thess. ii. 8.

This shall be succeeded by the fall of Babylon^p, predicted in a subsequent chapter, and this by the great and dreadful day of final account^q."

On the whole then we see from this prophecy, if the view I have taken of it be correct, that in the latter days, when the Gentiles shall have fallen away into the great apostacy, and the candlestick of the Christian Church shall be removed from amongst them, the Jewish nation, after their restoration to the promised land, shall again be subjected to fearful persecutions, and the great body of them forced to abandon Judea, and to take refuge in "a place prepared for them of God," where they shall be preserved "until the indignation be overpast;" that a formidable power shall then arise, headed by two remarkable leaders, who shall fix their seat and establish their authority among the apostate Gentiles, setting up a gross and blasphemous system of idolatry, persecuting the saints, the holy people, and putting all to death, whether Jew or Gentile, small or great, who shall refuse to conform to the idolatrous worship that shall be then the established religion of the world; that one at least of these blasphemous potentates shall have power to work miracles, whereby he shall deceive them that dwell on the earth; and that the kingdom which shall thus be set up on the ruins of the Gentile Church, and in open defiance of every thing divine and sacred, shall be destroyed only by the immediate presence

^p Chap. xiv. 8.

^q Ver. 9-20.

and sudden appearing of Him, "out of whose mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations ; who shall rule them with a rod of iron ; and who treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

It follows, therefore, that the question of the right interpretation of the Apocalypse, which I have endeavoured to bring before you, is not a mere question of idle speculation, but of deep and practical importance. If this book be a moral myth or allegory, as some have thought ; if its predictions have been all long ago fulfilled in the Jewish wars and the destruction of Jerusalem, as others tell us ; if the apostacy be already come, the witnesses slain, the beast and the prophet long ago revealed in the mediæval corruptions of Christianity, or the ambitious usurpations of the Court of Rome ; then it must be admitted that the prophecy does less intimately concern us than it would do if we should adopt the explanation of it for which I have been contending. Not that, under any circumstances, we should be justified in treating this sacred book with the practical neglect which is so commonly shewn for it ; for, whatever be its interpretation, and particularly if we regard it as predicting the existence of religious corruptions which are still in the midst of us, the Apocalypse must ever be read as a sacred mine of spiritual instruction and holy warning. But if it be true, as I have endeavoured to shew, and as the ancient Christians unanimously believed, that the purport of the Apocalypse is to forewarn us of a fearful trial of our

faith which is yet to come, which is, perhaps, at hand ; that it predicts an apostacy and the prevalence of errors, in comparison of which all former apostacy and heresy and error, great and awful as they have been, will sink into insignificance ; that it predicts a persecution of such bitter intensity, and of such universal extent, that all former persecutions of the Christian name will become as nothing ; and that it teaches us to look for a deliverance of the Church out of this fiery trial, not from any human aid or power, but from the irrefragable promise and glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ Himself ; then, surely, my brethren, the question whether these things are so or not—the question whether or not this be the real testimony of Holy Scripture, and the mind of Him by whose inspiration the Apocalypse was given—is a question which demands the most serious and unprejudiced examination from every Christian, and is especially deserving of our practical consideration now^a, when we are approaching that sacred season which the Church has set apart to commemorate the blessings of our Lord's first advent, and to forewarn us of His second coming.

I know it will be said that the interpretation of this prophecy which I have proposed, or rather which I would endeavour to revive, has a tendency to favour the Romish errors, as depriving us of one of the most powerful arguments against the religious

^a This discourse was delivered on the Sunday next before Advent.

corruptions and political usurpations now supported by the See of Rome ; for the Protestant interpretation of the Apocalypse, it is said, has ever proved the great bulwark of the reformed faith, and the surest safeguard against the encroachments of Rome.

But, my brethren, the real question is, not what interpretation of this prophecy is most useful to us in our political and religious controversies with other bodies of professing Christians ; but what is indeed and in truth the mind of the Holy Ghost. And if it should appear that the controversial expositions cannot be maintained without doing violence to the express words of Holy Scripture, by arbitrary and private interpretations, then it becomes our duty, whatever be the consequence, a duty we owe to the supremacy of the Word of God, to abandon all such erroneous and false expositions, however apparently useful they may be in controversy, and to receive with reverence and docility, as they that have an ear to hear, "what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

But it does not by any means follow that the teaching of the Roman Church, in so far as it differs from the faith of antiquity, and from our own, is a whit the less erroneous because it is not foretold in prophecy ; we may still reject it, as we reject every other heresy which is contrary to sound doctrine, on its proper ground, as a modern corruption, unsupported by Holy Scripture, and unknown to the old Catholic Fathers and Doctors of the primitive Church. But let us not add to the causes of passion in a controversy, from its very na-

ture sufficiently furnished with them, the additional bitterness of false accusation. Let us not suppose that the nick-names of Antichrist, or Babylon, or Man of Sin, cast upon our opponents, with rancorous acrimony, in popular invectives, can permanently advance the cause of truth ; but let us ever remember, as has been well said by a learned and pious layman of our Church, that “a good cause needs not be patroned by passion, but can sustain itself upon a temperate dispute^r.” And in point of fact, does not experience prove that such arts of controversy have more frequently been the means of hardening against the truth the minds of many, who would, perhaps, have yielded to the legitimate influence of fair and sober reasoning ?

The cause of our Church, my brethren, and of the reformation of religion which she has adopted, needs not the support of any falsehood, and has nothing to fear from the investigation of truth. If, therefore, the result of our inquiries into the real meaning of the Apocalypse be the conviction that Romanism is not the Antichrist of prophecy, let us not listen to those who would persuade us that the acknowledgment of this truth will, in any degree, weaken the defences of our reformed faith ; on the contrary, let us rejoice that we are permitted to regard the vast multitude of our fellow-creatures who are in communion with the See of Rome, not as those who, according to the sentence of the Scripture on the followers of Antichrist, would be be-

^r Sir Thomas Browne. *Religio Medici*, sec. v.

yond the possibility of salvation, and irreconcilable enemies of the Lord, but as fellow Christians ; who, notwithstanding their many grievous errors and superstitions, are still servants of the same Heavenly and most merciful Father, and heirs of the same blessed promise of everlasting salvation. Let us look forward with hope, even against hope, to the day when Rome too, with the Churches in her communion, may be led to follow the example of our own Church ; and, casting off the errors that now defile her, may unite with us in the defence of our common faith, and in preparation for the fearful trial that is foretold. And let us pray that the unity of the Church, acknowledged and seen of all men, may once more become her strength ; not the false unity which is derived from latitudinarian indifference to truth, still less the deadly union which is only a consent in error, but that agreement in the truth of God's holy word, that good and joyful dwelling together of brethren in unity, which is "like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down unto the beard, even unto Aaron's beard, and went down to the skirts of his clothing ; like as the dew of Hermon, which fell upon the hill of Sion ; for there the Lord promised His blessing and life for evermore'."

Whether this blessed restoration of love and charity be destined for the Church before her last great and bitter trial, or whether she must first pass through the fire of Antichrist's persecution, is a question

¹ Psalm cxxxiii.

that we need not now discuss ; whatever be the will of God on this subject, it is enough for us to know that it is our duty to take care lest obstacles to Christian unity be created or increased by any fault or sin of our's ; for even though it be impossible that offences should not come, our Lord has denounced Woe on them through whom they come. Let us, therefore, pray for grace, as our Church has taught us, to lay to heart the great dangers we are in from our unhappy divisions : that all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord, may be taken away ; that, as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one Hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, through Jesus Christ our Lord^u, singing with the redeemed and victorious saints, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty ; just and true are thy ways, Thou King of Saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify thy Name ? for Thou only are holy : for all nations shall come and worship before Thee ; for thy judgments are made manifest^v."

^u Collect in the Office for the Queen's Accession.

^v Rev. xv. 3, 4.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

NOTE A.—See LECTURE I. p. 21.

Ancient Expositions of the Apocalypse.

It has been remarked in the first of the foregoing Lectures^a that the interpretation of the Apocalypse, which is found in the writings of the Fathers of the third and fourth centuries, and which afterwards continued for many ages to be received in the Church, is spoken of by St. Jerome and others, as *a change* from an earlier system of exposition, which even in his time had not altogether perished, but was still maintained by a great number, perhaps he may mean a majority—"plurima multitudo"—of the Christians of that period^b.

Of this earlier exposition we know but little, except that it was literal; so literal that the doctrine of the millennial reign of Christ, with His risen saints, on earth, was a prominent part of it; and, that the abuses or exaggerations of that doctrine put forth by the Judaizing or oriental sects of the first three centuries, were among the principal causes of its disrepute and rejection. To this earlier exposition also, may be traced the traditional doctrines of Antichrist, which prevailed in the Church so universally and so long. These opinions were evidently derived, in the main, from the Apocalypse, and from a literal interpretation of the Apocalypse, and they were too closely in harmony with other prophecies of Holy Scripture, to be very easily eradicated from the belief of Christians, even if there had

^a See p. 13.

^b See the passage quoted p. 17, note.

been any attempt to discountenance them, which there was not ; for they were assumed and held by the mystical interpreters themselves, and employed not unfrequently in their explanations of the supposed symbols of the prophecy.

I have thought it desirable, in order to render what has been said of the early interpreters more easily intelligible, to give here a few specimens of some of the commentaries on the Apocalypse which were popular from the fourth to the fourteenth century. It is not my object to discuss the relative merits of the authors, nor to point out or classify the minute differences that may be found in their several expositions ; it will suffice to give such an account of them as may serve to convince the reader of the truth of what has been said, that the same general principle of interpretation prevailed from the fourth to the thirteenth century^c ; and, that the commentaries which were popular from that period to the era of the Reformation, were identical in principle with the historical and controversial expositions which still retain their influence both in the Roman and reformed communions.

The earliest attempt at an entire commentary on the Apocalypse now extant is that which is attributed to

VICTORINUS, *Bishop of Pettau, and Martyr*, A. D. 303, *circa*.

This commentary is evidently interpolated and corrupt, if indeed it contains, in the form in which it now exists, any part of the original work of Victorinus^e, who is mentioned by St. Jerome, as one of those who maintained the error of the Millenarians^f ; whereas, this commentary expressly opposes that doctrine. But we know that the millenarian error was carefully expunged from ancient writers^g ; and St. Jerome tells us that

^c See Lecture I. pp. 18-42.

^d St. Victorinus is supposed to have suffered in the reign of Diocletian. Pettau (Petavium or Petabium), is a town of the Duchy of Stiria, in the Archiepiscopate of Salzburgh. But it does not seem quite certain whether this was the place intended by Jerome, when he calls St. Victorinus, "*Episcopus Petavionensis* ;" at all events, Launoy seems to have proved that he did not mean Poitiers. See Tillemont,

Memoires, tom. v. p. 707, and Launoy, *De Victorino*, opp. tom. ii. part i. p. 684. Col. Allobr. 1731.

^e It is published in the *Biblioth. Patrum*, tom. iii. Lugd. 1677, p. 414.

^f See the passage quoted p. 17, note.

^g So the Dialogue of Sulpitius Severus, called *Gallus*, which St. Jerome tells us contained the millenarian error, has no trace of any such opinion in any existing copy. Hieron. in *Ezech.* xxxvi.

he himself had revised the commentary of Victorinus, inserting into it what he had found in other books : “Majorum statim libros revolvi : et quod in eorum commentariis reperi, Victorini opusculis sociavi^h.”

We have also the testimony of Ambrosius Autpertus, in his Commentary on the Apocalypse, that Jerome *expunged* from Victorinus some things which had been literally interpreted, and inserted others of his own :—“In quam videlicet [sc. Apocalypsim] apud Latinos primus commentatus est martyr Victorinus, cujus assertiones prosequens B. Hieronymus, quædam autem quæ ille juxta literam intellexerat auferens, quædam vero ex proprio adjiciens unum in eam condidit librum, &c.”

This is a remarkable testimony to the antiquity of the literal interpretation, and shews us also what unscrupulous liberties were then thought lawful in editing the theological writings, even of saints and martyrs, a fact that sufficiently accounts for the scanty remains we possess of the primitive interpretations of prophecy. The Commentary of Victorinus, however, or rather the fragment of it which now exists, is evidently of great antiquity ; it speaks of the Roman senate as then persecuting the Church^j ; it asserts the ancient opinion of Nero’s resurrection and reappearance as Antichrist, among the Jews^k ; and in enumerating St. Paul’s epistles^l, it omits the Epistle to the Hebrews, whose canonical authority, as we know, was in very early times doubted in the Latin Church. It is also remarkable that one passage still remains (having escaped, it seems, the expurgating hand of Jerome), in which the ancient millennial doctrine is clearly alluded to. Speaking of the Apostles, whom the author supposes to be represented by our Lord’s “feet like unto fine brass” (Rev. i. 15.), he says : “Ubi illi primum steterunt, ec-

^h Hieron. Ep. ad Anatolium. Bibl. PP. Ibid p. 414.

ⁱ Bibl. Patrum. t. xiii. p. 404. E. Lugd. 1677.

^j “Et vidi, inquit, mulierem ebriam de sanguine sanctorum, decreto senatus illius consummatæ nequitie, et omnem contra fidei prædicationem etiam latam indulgentiam ipse dedit decretum in universis gentibus.” Bibl. Patr. t. iii.

p. 420. H.

^k “Hunc ergo suscitatum Deus mittet regem dignum dignis, et Christum qualem meruerunt Judæi. Et quoniam aliud nomen allaturus est, aliam etiam vitam institurus, ut sic eum tantam Christum excipiant Judæi.”—*Ibid.* p. 420. D.

^l Ibid. p. 415. E.

clesiam confirmaverunt, id est, in Judæa, ubi omnes sancti conventuri sunt, et Dominum suum adoraturi^m.”

On the whole, therefore, we may perhaps consider this commentary as a fragment of the work of Victorinus, although altered to suit the views which were made orthodox by the influence of Jerome and Augustine in the fifth century, and, perhaps, also subsequently corrupted. It does not, however, profess to comment minutely on every part of the prophecy, but touches only on the principal portions of it^a.

It begins by a mystical interpretation of the apparition of our Lord in the midst of the golden candlesticks (Rev. i. 12–20). He is called *like* unto the Son of Man because He had risen from the dead, and resumed the glory which He had received from the Father. The source of this glory, “majestatis origo,” is shewn by His head being white; for the Head of Christ is God; and the whiteness of His hair denotes the saints, who are clothed in white, and are said to be “white like *wool*,” because the saints are Christ’s *sheep*; and “like snow,” to denote their innumerable multitudes—“innumerabilem candidatorum turbam de cœlo datorum.” His eyes like a flame, are the commandments of God, which give light to the faithful, and consume unbelievers. His countenance was as the Sun, for so He appeared to men, although the glory of the Sun is far inferior to the glory of the Lord. He is compared to the Sun, which rises and sets, because he was born, suffered, and rose again. He is clothed with a garment down to the feet as a priest, i. e. with His flesh, or His sacerdotal office. His paps are the two Testaments. His golden girdle, the choir of the saints, who are like gold tried in the fire. The *two* edged sword denotes the Law and the Gospel, for it was out of His mouth that both proceeded; the *sword* also intimates that all, of both dispensations, shall be judged by the word of His mouth. His voice, as the sound of many waters, denotes the nations of the world, and also the gift of baptism, sent forth into

^m Ibid. p. 415. D.

^a And this may be considered an additional reason for believing that we possess in this work the substance, at least, of what Victorinus wrote, after allowing for expurgations and interpo-

lations: for Cassiodorus tells us that the Commentary of Victorinus treated only of difficult places, “difficilia quædam loca tractavit.”—*Cassiod. Lib. de Instit.* c. 9. (quoted by Ceillier, *Hist. des Auteurs Eccl.* tom. iii. p. 346.)

all nations, by means of the Apostles, for the salvation of men. His feet, like fine brass, are the Apostles, refined like brass in the furnace of martyrdom, for by them, as by feet, the preaching of Christ goeth forth through the world. The seven stars in His right hand are the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Ghost, or the seven Churches to whom the following epistles are addressed. For what He writes to these seven, He writes to all, for seven denotes all, i. e. the one Catholic Church ; which St. Paul also taught us when he wrote epistles to seven Churches, the Roman, the Corinthian, the Galatian, the Ephesian, the Philippian, the Colossian, the Thessalonian, but addressed his other epistles to individuals, lest he should exceed the number of seven Churches^o. The seven Churches, therefore, denote the Church Catholic, and the seven epistles are addressed to seven classes of men in the Church : the first to them who, on the whole, deserve praise^p ; the second to those for whom he has true riches in reserve, although here they are poor, and suffer persecution from the Jews, who are not Jews, but the synagogue of Satan, "quoniam ab Antichristo colliguntur;" the third to the strong in faith, who fear not persecution. The *hidden manna* is immortality ; the *white stone* is adoption to be sons of God ; the *new name* is Christian.

The fourth epistle is addressed to them who do good works, increasing in them daily more and more, "the last to be more than the first^q." *I will put upon you no other burden*, i. e. I will not

^o In the tract of Victorinus *De fabrica Mundi*, published by Cave (Hist. Lit. vol. i. p. 103, Lond. 1638), the author, enumerating the various things mentioned in Scripture that were *Seven* in number, mentions "vii. mulieres apud Esaiam, vii. Ecclesias apud Paulum." Cave suggests that for *Paulum* we should, perhaps, read *Apocalypsim* ; but this passage in the Commentary on the Apocalypse shews the emendation to be unnecessary ; and the prophecy of Isaiah (iv. 1.) is also alluded to in this latter work in the same connexion, "Hunc typum a Spiritu Sancto per Esaiam prædicari legimus, de septem mulieribus quæ apprehen-

derunt hominem unum. Unus homo Christus est, non ex semine natus.—Septem mulieres ecclesiæ sunt, panem accipientes suum, &c."—*Bibl. Patr.* t. iii. p. 415. E.

^p His account of the Nicolaitans may be quoted as a proof of the antiquity of the work : "Nicolaitæ autem erant illo tempore ficti homines et pestiferi, qui sub nomine Nicolai ministri fecerunt sibi hæresim : ut delibatum exorcizaretur, et manducari posset ; et ut quicumque fornicatus esset octava di pacem acciperet."—*Ibid.* G.

^q There seems to be here in the original an allusion to Montanism as a current heresy of the day : "Sed et

impose upon you the observances of the law. *I will give him power over the nations*, i. e. I will make him a judge among the other saints. *I will give him the morning star*, i. e. he shall be partaker of the first resurrection.

The fifth epistle is addressed to the negligent, the busy with secular affairs, "*nomine tantum Christianos*." The sixth is to those who, though humble in the world, and unlearned, "*rustici in scripturis*," nevertheless hold the faith, unshaken by any persecution. The seventh is addressed to the rich, "*apud quos in cubiculo quædam scripturæ tractantur, foris autem an sint fideles a nemine intelligitur*." *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire*, i. e. "*si quo modo potestis pro nomine Domini pati*." *Anoint thine eyes with eye salve*, that thou mayest know how to do this work.

The author next proceeds to give a symbolical interpretation of the throne, sea of glass, &c. (chap. iv.), which I omit. The four beasts, he says, are the four Gospels. The four and twenty elders are the books of the Prophets and the Law¹. The eyes within and without denote the preaching of the New Testament, which proves a special providence, and discerns the secrets of the heart. The six wings each are the testimonies of the twenty-four books of the Old Testament, which are, as it were, wings to the Gospels, because, without the preaching of the Old Testament, the New could never have been received. So if the wings were

ibi esse quoque homines faciles ad illicitas paces dandas, et prophetias novas dandas ostendit."—*Bibl. Patr.* t. iii p. 416. A.

¹ This passage is a remarkable proof that the work was written in a season of persecution.

* It is worth noting, as another proof of antiquity, that our author enumerates the Gospels in the following order, Mark, Matthew, Luke, John. He makes only twenty-four prophets under the Old Testament, according to the old Jewish way of reckoning twenty-four books of the Old Testament; as in the Targum (Cant. v. 10). ועסיק בעשרין וארבעה ספרין דאורייתא ופתגמי נבואה וכתבי;

"And it is comprised in twenty-four books, viz. the Law, and the words of

the Prophets, and the Hagiographa."

So also in Bemidbar rabba (a commentary of great antiquity) on Eccles. xii. 11.

מה מסמרהו הכהנים עשרים וארבעה אף הספרים עשרי וארבעה:

"As the courses of the priests were twenty-four, so also the holy books were twenty-four."

The number of twenty-four is made out by counting the books of the law as five; the greater prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) as seven; the twelve minor prophets as one; and the hagiographa as eleven, viz.: Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Solomon's Song, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, and Chronicles.

not attached to the beasts, they would have been dead, as the prophecies, if they never had been fulfilled in Christ, would have been vain and useless. Therefore the Catholic Church is, as it were, the winged and living animal. Heretics, who neglect the prophetic testimony¹, are animals without wings, cleaving to earth. And the Jews, who reject the New Testament, have wings indeed, but live not; holding forth to men an empty prophecy, which they compare not with its fulfilment. Or there are twenty-four elders, because the twelve Apostles and the twelve Patriarchs shall judge the tribes of Israel. The lightnings, and thunderings, and voices proceeding out of the throne, he explains thus: The lightnings are the coming of the Lord; the voices, the preaching of the New Testament; the thunders, the heavenly words. The lamps of fire (which he calls torches, "*faces ignis ardentis*," not *lampades*, as in the modern Vulgate) are the gift of the Holy Ghost, "*quoniam in lignum passionis est redditum*."

To open the seals is to overcome death for man, "*pro homine mortem devincere*;" which no one, neither angel, nor man on earth, nor soul of saint in rest, was able to do but Christ alone, who is called "the lion of the tribe of Judah," because he conquered death; and a "lamb as it were slain," because he suffered for men; and therefore he was able to open that testament which he had sealed. For the opening of the seals is the opening of the Old Testament, and the prediction of the preachers who are to be in the last time.

The first seal, or the white horse, is the word of preaching sent forth into the world by the Holy Ghost: according to our Lord's words, "this Gospel shall be preached in all the world, for a testimony unto the Gentiles, and then shall the end come."

The second seal, or the red horse, denotes wars, as we read in the Gospel, "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom," &c.

The black horse signifies famine; as our Lord says, "there

¹ Here there is a plain allusion to the early heretics who rejected the Old Testament; another proof of the antiquity of the book.

shall be famines in divers places." And this is properly extended to the time of Antichrist ; " *Proprie autem extenditur verbum usque ad Antichristi tempora, quoniam magna fames est ventura, quaque omnes lædentur.*"

The pale horse denotes what our Lord has also foretold, great pestilences. And Hell follows him, expecting to swallow up the souls of many wicked men. The souls of the slain are seen under the altar, i. e. under the earth ; for as the golden altar signifies heaven, so the brazen altar signifies earth, "*sub qua est infernus, remota pænis et ignibus regio, et requies sanctorum: in qua quidem ab impiis videntur et audiuntur justī, et neque illuc transmeare possunt.*" The white robes are the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Under the sixth seal, the great earthquake is the last persecution. The sun made sackcloth denotes the darkening of doctrine to unbelievers. The moon became blood, i. e. the Church pours forth her blood for Christ. The stars fall, i. e. the faithful are troubled. The fig-tree sheds its figs, i. e. men apostatize from the Church in the time of persecution⁷.

Here there comes in a long paragraph, which is evidently misplaced ; it treats of the interpretation of ch. xi. to xii. 5, inclusive. Then follows another paragraph which continues the interpretation of the sixth seal, and ends with ch. xi. 1. These two paragraphs have, therefore, been obviously transposed ; but they may as well be described in the order in which they stand^x.

The reed like unto a rod given to St. John, denotes the power given to him in the Churches, which he afterwards exercised, when he wrote his Gospel against the errors of Cerinthus,

⁷ Here we find the ancient doctrine of the separate state, which the schoolmen have corrupted into the Romish doctrine of Purgatory.

^x The interpretation given by our author of the first five seals is evidently a remnant of the ancient literal exposition. And it is remarkable that where the figurative interpretation begins, the corruption of the text of this commentary becomes manifest.

* The first paragraph above described begins with the words, "*Novissimam arundinum similem virgæ.*" [which, by the way, are evidently corrupt], p. 418. C., and end "*Virga, ferrea gladius persecutionis,*" p. 419. A. The second paragraph begins "*Omnes recessisse de locis suis,*" p. 419. A., and ends, "*gladiis alterutrum sunt castræ,*" p. 419. H.

Valentinus, and Ebion, whom he confuted by the reed and measure of the faith. Our author supposes the witnesses to be Elias and Jeremiah, not Moses or Elisha, as some thought, for they are both dead, but the death of Jeremiah is not recorded⁷; moreover it is said that Jeremiah should be a prophet "unto the nations," (Jer. i. 5), which he never was, and, therefore, in order to fulfil this word of God, it is necessary that he should be one of the witnesses. They are called the two candlesticks, and the two olive trees, in reference to the prophecy of Zechariah. The fire which comes out of their mouths is the power of the word of God. They smite with plagues, i. e. the angels smite the earth with plagues at their bidding. These prophets are slain by Antichrist, and rise again on the *fourth* day, "ne quis Domino æqualis inveniatur."

Antichrist is called the beast from the bottomless pit, because he will ascend from the abyss: "sed non sua virtute nec patris sui suscitatur sed Dei jussu." In illustration of this the author quotes Ezek. xxxi. 3-17. Is. xiv. 24-27. 2 Thess. ii. 7, which passages he applies to Nero, who, he supposes, will rise again and become Antichrist. Sodom and Egypt (Rev. xi. 8) mean Jerusalem.

The interpretation of ch. xii. which follows, is probably an interpolation. It begins with a sort of apology, telling us that the Spirit of God sometimes goes back to past events, sometimes forward to things future, and adds, "ergo interpretatio sequentium dictorum ea monstrabit, ut non ordine lectionis, sed rationis intelligatur."

The opening of the Temple (xi. 19) is the manifestation of Christ: for the Temple of God is His Son, for which he refers to the Gospel, where our Lord says, "Destroy this Temple," meaning the temple of His Body. The Ark of the covenant is the preaching of the Gospel, the remission of sins, and other

⁷ The author says, "Omnes veteres nostri tradiderunt illum esse Hieremiam." Whom did he mean by "veteres nostri?" The text seems corrupted, for there is no antecedent to *illum*. The opinion that Jeremiah will be one of the witnesses is mentioned by

St. Hilary in Matt. xx. n. 10. (Ed. Bened. Par. 1693, col. 710. A.) Perhaps what is said of Jeremiah, 2 Macc. xv. 14, "multum orat pro populo," may be founded on the ancient belief that he had never died. See Fabricius, Cod. Pseudepigr. Vet. Test. p. 1111.

benefits of the Gospel. The woman clothed with the sun, &c., is the ancient Church of the Fathers, Prophets, and Holy Apostles, who travailed with pain until she saw Christ, the promised fruit, born of her own people according to the flesh, i. e. the Jews^a. The sun with which she is clothed, denotes the resurrection, "*speciem resurrectionis significat, et gloriam repromissionis.*" The moon signifies the fall of the bodies of the saints, "*casus sanctorum corporum et debitum mortis, quo deficere nunquam potest.*" For the hope of them that sleep is not extinguished, as some suppose, but they have light in darkness as the moon. The crown of twelve stars denotes the twelve Jewish patriarchs. The red dragon is the devil: but he was unable to devour Christ, i. e. to retain Him in death, being born of incorruptible seed; and so the devil, having approached to tempt Him as a man, found him other than he thought, and so departed from Him for a season. He was caught up to God: for so we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that, as He talked with His disciples He was taken up into heaven. The rod of iron is the sword of persecution.

Here ends the first of the transposed passages already described. The next takes up the interpretation of the sixth seal, which, however, is evidently mutilated and imperfect, omitting ch. vi. 15-17 altogether; the whole is comprehended in these words, "*Omnes recessisse de locis suis, i. e. quod boni movebuntur, persecutionem fugientes.*"

The four angels (ch. vii. 1), or the four winds across the River Euphrates, are four nations, for every nation has its appointed angel, and they pass not their bounds, because they will come in the last time with Antichrist. The multitude of the sealed are the elect, who, cleansed by the blood of the Lamb in Baptism, have made white their robes, keeping the grace they had received. The half hour's silence on the opening of the seventh seal (viii. 1) is the beginning of eternal rest^a: "*sed partem intellexit, quia interruptio eadem per ordinem repetit*^b. Nam si esset

^a The original here is as follows: "*Quæ gemitus et tormenta habuit desiderii sui, usquequo fructum ex plebe sua secundum carnem olim promissum,*

sibi videret Christum ex ipsa gente corpus sumpsisse."

^a See above, p. 128.

^b This seems to intimate that the

juge silentium, hic finis narrandi fieret." The angel ascending from the east (vii. 2) is the prophet Elias, for which our author quotes Mal. iv. 5. "He shall turn the hearts," &c. to Christ by repentance; therefore the prophecy shews the number of the Jews who shall believe, and a great multitude of the Gentiles^c. The seven archangels (viii. 2) are sent against Antichrist; as it is written, "Then shall the Son of Man send His angels, and gather together His elect," &c. A trumpet is a word of power. And what is here foretold under the trumpets is repeated again in the vials (ch. xv.); not that the events are to happen twice, but to shew the certainty of God's decree^d. The trumpets and vials, therefore, describe the plagues sent on the world, or the fury of Antichrist, or the removing of the people ("populorum detractio"), or the difference of plagues, or the hope in the kingdom of the saints ("spes in regno sanctorum"^e), or the ruin of cities, or the fall of Babylon, i. e. Rome.

The great eagle flying in the midst of heaven (viii. 13), is the Holy Ghost testifying in the two prophets (i. e. in the two witnesses), that great woe is approaching.

The mighty angel (x. 1) is our Lord. His face was as the sun, i. e. from His Resurrection; the rainbow on His head, denotes the Judgment. The open book is the Apocalypse. His feet as before (see the exposition of i. 15) are the Apostles. The seven thunders are the sevenfold power of the Holy Ghost, proclaiming things to come by the Prophets. St. John is forbidden to write what the thunders uttered, i. e. to explain what is obscure in the prophecies of the Old Testament, but is commanded to

author considered the trumpets to be a repetition of the events foretold under the seals, according to the view advocated in the foregoing Lectures. See pp. 72, 127, 220.

^c Here is another remarkable remnant of the ancient literal interpretation. See p. 118, sq.

^d Our author's words deserve to be quoted here, as confirming in a remarkable manner the view that has been taken in the foregoing lectures, of the structure of the Apocalypse: "Tuba autem verbum est potestatis, et licet repetat per phialas, non quasi bis fac-

tum dicit, sed quoniam semel futurum est quod est decretum a Deo ut fiat, ideo bis dicitur. Quicquid igitur in tubis minus dixit, hinc [?] hoc] in phialis est. Nec aspiciendus est ordo dictorum, quoniam sæpe Spiritus Sanctus ubi ad novissimi temporis finem percurrerit, rursus ad eadem tempora redit, et supplet ea quæ minus dixit. Nec requirendus est ordo in Apocalypsi, sed intellectus. Sequendus est enim et ipse Propheta."—p. 419. D.

^e This passage is an evident remnant of the original Chiliasm of this commentary.

leave them sealed, "quia erat apostolus, nec oportebat gratiam sequentis gradus in primo collocari."

The remainder of this portion of the commentary is evidently very corrupt. The book eaten by St. John was sweet in the mouth, &c., because the benefit of preaching is sweet both to him that speaks and to them that hear; but afterwards bitter by suffering, both to the preacher, and to them that persevere in the commandments. "Thou must prophecy again," &c. (x. 11) predicts St. John's deliverance from martyrdom on the death of Domitian; for at the time he received the Apocalypse he regarded himself as condemned to death, and believed that he would never again prophesy.

Then follows a sentence intended to explain St. John's receiving the reed like unto a rod; but it is so corrupt as to be unintelligible, and here ends the second of the transposed paragraphs.

The Commentary next takes up the exposition of ch. xii. 3. The dragon (whom our author apparently^f identified with the Beast of ch. xvii. 3) is the Devil, who is red, or scarlet-coloured, because he is a murderer from the beginning. His seven heads are seven Roman kings, of whom Antichrist is one. The ten horns are ten kings in the last time. The woman who flies into the wilderness is the Catholic Church, of whom in the last time shall be 144,000 believers, by the preaching of Elias; but this includes others also who shall then be alive. For our Lord says, "Let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains," i. e. let them flee into the place prepared for them, and be nourished there three years and an half from the face of the Devil. The two wings, given to the woman, are the two prophets, Elias and the other. The serpent cast water out of his mouth, i. e. ordered his army to follow the woman. The earth opened its mouth, i. e. vengeance followed immediately ("vindictam de præsentibus manifestam"). This prophecy the author says is partly fulfilled, for Christ is already born; but partly unfulfilled, for the woman has not yet fled into the wilderness.

The war in heaven, and the casting out of the dragon, is to

^f I say apparently, because the text is evidently very corrupt; and it will be observed that the interpretation here

given of "the woman clothed with the sun," &c. is different from that which occurred in a former passage. See p. 278.

take place after the three years and a half of the preaching of Elias ; for until then both Satan and other apostate angels have the power of appearing in heaven. And then is the beginning of Antichrist, as St. Paul says, *Nisi prius venerit discessio, &c.* That the dragon's tail drew the third part of the stars, may be interpreted two ways ; either that he will seduce the third part of believers among men ; or rather that he will draw with him the third part of the angels subject to him.

The beast ascending from the sea like unto a leopard (ch. xiii.) is the kingdom of Antichrist, mixed (as the leopard's spots) of all peoples and nations ; its feet are the leaders ; its mouth like a lion's, i. e. armed to shed blood. The seven heads are the mountains where the woman [i. e. Rome] sitteth : "and there are seven kings," &c. (xvii. 10) ; this is to be understood of the time when the Apocalypse was written² : "one is," i. e. Cæsar Domitianus ; "five are fallen," viz., Titus, his brother, Vespasian, his father, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. "Another is not yet come," viz., Nerva, and when he cometh he shall continue a short space, for Nerva reigned scarce two years. "And the beast which thou sawest is of the seven ;" i. e. Nero reigned before those emperors : "and is the eighth," for when he comes again he will be counted eighth : "and goeth into perdition," ("in interitum vadit"), i. e. he will be the last. One of the heads wounded to death, and the wound cured, denotes Nero ; for he killed himself with his sword ; and God will raise him up and send him as a king worthy of the Jews ; and, as he will bear another name, the Jews will receive him as Christ. He shall come up from hell, as Ezekiel says, (xxxi. 4), *Aqua nutriet illum, et abyssus auxit illum*. Then follows our author's explanation of the number 666, which is evidently corrupt and unintelligible.

The beast out of the earth is the false prophet who is to work miracles before the other ; he is to have horns like a lamb, i. e. the appearance of a just man ; but to speak like a dragon, i. e.

* This is a remarkable proof of the antiquity of the fundamental mistake which has prevented this passage being understood to the present day. For, surely, it speaks not of the time

when the Apocalypse was written, but of the future time to which the vision refers. See what has been said on Rev. i. 10, p. 55, sq., and Note B.

full of the malice of the devil. He will bring fire from heaven by magical arts, and cause the golden image of Antichrist in the temple of Jerusalem to speak, by making an apostate angel enter it. He will make all slaves and freemen receive a mark in their foreheads and hands, the number of his name, lest any should buy or sell.

The angel flying in the midst of heaven (xiv. 6) is Elias ; the second angel (v. 8) is the other witness.

The remainder of the commentary is probably spurious, and our present purpose does not require us to speak of it. We may go on, therefore, to give specimens of commentaries of somewhat later date.

I shall select one by a writer of the *eighth century*, viz. :

AMBROSIUS AUTPERTUS, *Abbot of St. Vincent*, who died July 19, A. D. 778. This commentary is entirely mystical and allegorical ; it will be found in the *Bibliotheca Patrum*, tom. xiii. p. 493. (Lugd. 1677).

The opening of the seals denotes the revelation of mysteries or sacraments. In *the first seal*, the white horse is the human nature of Christ ; the rider is the Divine nature of Christ ; and both together represent the mystery of the Incarnation. Or else, perhaps, the horse may be the preachers of Christ. The bow is the Old and New Testament, for the words of Scripture penetrate the heart like arrows.

In *the second seal*, the red horse is the body of the reprobate ; the rider is the author of discord, or the Devil, to whom it is given to take peace from the earth, i. e. from the reprobate ; that they should kill one another, not carnally, but spiritually, i. e. by the great sword of spiritual wickedness, or of evil speaking and deceit.

In *the third seal*, the black horse is the body of the wicked, hungering, as it were, to devour the body of Christ ; the balance represents the temporal rewards for which they sell their souls ; the famine is of the word of God (Amos viii.) ; and the wine and oil denote the graces of the Holy Spirit in the elect, which the enemy is unable to touch.

In *the fourth seal*, the pale horse denotes the spiritual death of

the wicked ; the rider is the Devil, the author of death, whom hell follows to receive his victims ; power is given him over four parts of the earth (see *Vulg.*) i. e. over the four divisions of the wicked, the heathen, the Jews, the heretics, and ungodly Christians.

The *fifth seal* represents the persecutions or martyrdom of the elect, who are seen under the altar, i. e. under Christ, as being inferior to Him who is over them as the head over its body. They cry out to express their longing for the day of judgment and the resurrection of the dead. The white robes denote the grace of baptism, or the reward of martyrdom, or the joys of heaven ; and they receive *robes* in the plural, to shew that in the resurrection the body as well as the soul has its reward.

The earthquake under *the sixth seal* denotes the last persecution under Antichrist. The sun darkened, denotes those who in that last persecution will deny Christ. The moon turned into blood is the Church, "*ecclesiam in electis cruore passionis infectam.*" The stars falling to earth are those who, in the persecution of Antichrist, shall apostatize from the Church. The heaven departs as a book, i. e. the Church is withdrawn from the reprobate. Every mountain (i. e. every man of rank and dignity), and every island, (i. e. every man of minor righteousness—"minoris justitiæ"), is removed from its place, i. e. the Church is withdrawn from those who deny Christ. The kings of the earth (i. e. those who rule their bodies in righteousness), princes (i. e. who, not as the kings, but as far as they can, resist vice), tribunes (i. e. those of still inferior moral virtue), the rich (in good works), the strong (in virtue of the soul), the slave (i. e. the married man, "*conjugio obligatus*"), and the free (i. e. the unmarried, "*a copula conjugali absolutus*"), all these shall hide themselves in caves and rocks (i. e. they shall ask the prayers of the saints, "*sanctorum suffragia petunt.*") They shall say to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, &c., i. e. "*miser cordia animum flectite, nosque piis interventionibus ab ira judicantis tegite.*" Another interpretation of this part of the prophecy is also suggested, which explains it not of the righteous, but of the wicked : "*quamvis cuncta hæc quæ de electis dicta intelleximus, possunt impiorum etiam*

personis aptari." The mountains may denote the proud and worldly ; the islands, those who are surrounded by the waves of secular business, and so on.

The four angels (ch. vii.) are the body of Satan, "*corpus antiqui hostis*;" they stand at the four quarters of the earth, i. e. on the four kingdoms of this world, the Assyrians, the Medes, the Persians (or Macedonians), and the Romans, in which idolatry reigned (for here the vision goes back to the times before Christ) ; they withhold the winds from blowing, i. e. they prohibit all opposition to the prevalent idolatry. The earth, sea, and trees, denote the different dispositions of men.

The angel ascending from the east represents our Lord rising from the dead ; he calls to the four former angels, i. e. he converts the four kingdoms of the world to the faith. He has the seal of God, i. e. the mystery of the cross, with which he seals all who by faith pass over from the world to the number of the elect. The number of the sealed, although finite, is to be understood as infinite, denoting the sum total of the elect. For 3 is a perfect number, as being the number of the Trinity ; 4 is also a perfect number, as denoting the four quarters of the world, the four rivers of Paradise, the four Evangelists, the four cardinal virtues ; 3 multiplied by 4 or 12, is also sacred, as being the number of the twelve tribes, and of the twelve Apostles ; 1000 denotes universality, as we read (Ps. cv.) "his promise that he made to a thousand generations." The number 12,000, therefore, represents the Church, which is gathered by a knowledge of the Trinity out of all generations ; but to denote the perfection of faith it is necessary that the 12 in this number be squared, which makes it 144,000. So that by this mystical number is represented, not the number of the holy innocents killed by Herod, as some thought, but the sum total of all the elect.

This may suffice as a specimen of this interpretation, which goes on to the end in the same strain. It will only be necessary to request the reader to observe how entirely the notion of the Apocalypse being a prophecy, intended to make known things to come, is lost sight of. See page 21.

The next specimen shall be taken from a writer of the *ninth century*, viz. :

HAYMO, Bishop of Halberstadt,

who died March 27, A. D., 853. The Commentary of this writer^h on the Apocalypse is an abridgement of that of Ambrosius Autpertus, and proceeds on the same hypothesis of a mystical conflict between the city of the elect and the city of the reprobate.

It may, therefore, suffice to give as a specimen his exposition of the Trumpets.

The seven angels denote the preachers of the Church universal, who are seven, because they are filled with the seven-fold Spirit, and are set over the university of believers, for seven denotes universality and perfection. They stand in the presence of God, i. e. they despise earthly pleasures, and are given to contemplation of God. The seven trumpets denote the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The eighth angel with the golden censer is Christ : he stood before the altar as the high priest of good things to come. The golden censer is the body of the Lord : he took the censer when he joined a mortal body to His Divinity. He offers incense on the altar (i. e. on Himself) to God the Father, for through Him the saints offer up their prayers and good works to the Father; as it is written: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," &c. His casting the fire of the altar upon the earth may be understood of his sending His Holy Spirit upon the earth, into the hearts of the Apostles, when he breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" or into the hearts of the Gentiles, to convert them to the faith. The thunders, and voices, and earthquakes, are the commotions and persecutions which followed the preaching of the apostles. The seven angels which had the seven trumpets, i. e. the preachers of the Church universal, who had the knowledge of the two Testaments, prepared themselves to sound, i. e. to preach the Gospel.

^h This Commentary, which is attributed to Haymo, on the authority of Trithemius, is often found in MSS. under the name of Remy or Remigius of

Auxerre, who died in 908. Ceillier, *Hist. des Auteurs Eccles.* xviii. 717, and xix. 489. The edition here used is that of Colon. 1529, 8°.

On the sounding of *the first trumpet*, there followed hail, (i. e. the anger of God), fire (i. e. the hatred of the reprobate against the saints), mixed with blood, to denote the perdition of those who persecute the saints. The earth denotes worldly men, upon whom the wrath of God falls; the third part of the earth is burned, i. e. the wicked, for the righteous are two parts, viz., prelates and subjects, or preachers and hearers; the third part is therefore the reprobate, i. e. heretics, pagans, Jews, and false Christians. The trees denote the chiefs of the wicked, "*malorum summa*": the green grass denotes the voluptuous, the luxurious, and unclean; as the prophet says, "all flesh is as grass," &c.

On the sounding of *the second trumpet*, a great mountain, i. e. the Devil, is cast into the sea, i. e. begins to dwell in the world, and in the hearts of the reprobate. On the sounding of the trumpet, i. e. on the preaching of the doctors of the Church, the Devil is driven from those who are ordained to eternal life, and is forced to dwell with the reprobate. The third part of the sea became blood, i. e. carnal wisdom labours to defend heresy and false Christianity by vain philosophy. The third part of creatures died, i. e. heretics, pagans, Jews, and false Christians, although alive in body, are spiritually dead: the third part of ships denotes heretics, &c., who are driven about as ships without a pilot.

When *the third trumpet* sounded, a star (i. e. the Devil) fell from heaven, i. e. from the society of holy angels; as it is written: "I saw Satan like lightning fall from heaven," burning like a torch, i. e. with hatred of the human race. And he fell upon the third part of rivers and fountains, i. e. upon heretics, Jews, pagans, &c. The name of the star was Wormwood, to shew the bitterness of heretical doctrine, which poisons the fountains of the faith; and many men died of the waters, which were made bitter, i. e. of the doctrine of the heretics.

Fourth trumpet. The sun, moon, and stars denote the Church; the third part of them smitten, denotes the prevalence of heresy, two parts only of the Church being left untainted; the third part darkened, denotes that the heretics are cast out of the Church and anathematized, for until then they seem to be lights,

but after they are sentenced by the Church their light is extinguished. The eagle flying through the midst of heaven denotes the Church universal, or her doctors, who fly through the midst of heaven, i. e. through the Church. The three woes denote the eternal damnation denounced by the three woe trumpets; and they are denounced against the inhabitants of the earth, i. e. against those who are occupied in earthly and carnal pursuits.

Fifth trumpet. The star that fell from heaven is the Devil: from heaven, i. e. from the number of the angels; or from the Church, for the Devil may be said to fall from heaven, whenever any one is converted to the faith from paganism, or regenerated by baptism, renouncing the devil and all his works, and his pomps. He falls on earth, i. e. on those who are earthly. The bottomless pit denotes evil desires in the hearts of the reprobate. The pit denotes heretics. The key of the pit is the power which the Devil holds over heretics, pagans, and other infidels. He opens the pit, i. e. he inspires heretics with their doctrine; or the key may denote earthly kings and potentates, who protect and encourage heretics. The smoke of the pit is the doctrine of heretics. The great furnace is the last great persecution of Antichrist; for all heresy resembles the doctrine of Antichrist, except that in his times false doctors will work miracles, and therefore the error will be greater. The sun darkened is the Church darkened by the smoke, i. e. the doctrine, of heretics. The locusts are the disciples of heretics. They have no power to hurt the grass, i. e. they have no power over the little ones of Christ; nor the trees, i. e. the full-grown Christians, perfect in the faith; but only the men not sealed, i. e. pagans, Jews, and false Christians. Not to kill them, refers to the grass and trees, which they were not permitted to hurt. By the five months is to be understood all the present time from the ascension of our Lord to the end of the world, in which time heretics shall be permitted to torment the Church¹. For as there are five senses in the body, the whole of this present time

¹ This is a remarkable specimen of the manner in which the principle of figurative interpretation leads to the perversion of the word of God. But

is it worse than the expositions of this prophecy by modern authors, of which some specimens have been given, page 142, sq.?

may well be called *five months*, as if to say that the impious shall have power to hurt as long as the five bodily senses continue. Their torment is like that of scorpions, for as the scorpion's sting is behind, therefore, heretics hurt only transitory things, "*quæ cito transeunt et in præsentī relinquuntur, atque ideo posteriora nuncupantur.*" They hurt by the tail, i. e. in the power of this world, by threats or blandishments. Men shall seek death, i. e. the elect, particularly priests and bishops, in these times (scil. from the ascension to the end of the world, and especially in the times of Antichrist), seeing the progress of heresy, will desire to live in contemplation of God, as it were dead to the world, and living only to God. But death shall flee from them, i. e. for the good of others they will be forced to take some part in secular life. The locusts are like horses, to shew the speed and activity with which heretics run through the world, armed for battle, to fight against the faith. The crowns denote victory ; but they have on their heads not crowns but *tanquam coronæ*, and not golden, but *similes auro*, to shew that their victories over the faith will be apparent only. They have faces like men, to shew the plausibility of their doctrines, which seem reasonable ; and the hair of women, to shew their dissolute and lascivious minds. Or the faces of men and hair of women, may signify that they will deceive both sexes : and women often were the fosterers of heresy, as the sister of Constantine, who recalled Arius from exile, and Justina, who defended Arian doctrine against St. Ambrose. Or the hair of women may denote the seducing power of heretics. Their teeth like lions, lacerating and killing the souls of men, and emitting a natural stench, i. e. spreading evil reports. Their breastplates denote hardness of heart, impenetrable to the arrows of truth. Their wings are the power of heretics. Their sound is like the sound of chariots, for chariots go forth from the stables separate and distinct from each other, until they reach the field of battle, when they unite and fight together ; so heretics separate from each other, and maintain opposite errors. Thus Photinus denies that Christ existed before he was born of Mary. Arius, on the contrary, declares that Christ was begotten before all the world, but created ;

and so others, who, however opposed to each other, unite together to fight against the unity of the Church. Their sting denotes sin, as St. Paul says, "the sting of death is sin." Above they are said to torment five months (v. 5), i. e. to torment the elect, whom they cannot kill; but here (v. 10), they are said to hurt five months, i. e. to hurt the wicked, whom they destroy, but do not torment. Their king is the devil. One woe is past, i. e. the first woe relates to the times of the holy martyrs, the remaining two to the times of Antichrist.

Sixth Trumpet. The golden altar is the Church. Its horns are the preachers of the Gospel. The voice is the voice of Christ, commanding the sixth angel, i. e. the whole church, to loose the four angels, i. e. the four principal kingdoms, and their four powers, and the whole body of the devil. The Church looses the four angels, because she has the power of binding and loosing. The number four denotes universality, as we read that in the end of the world the elect are gathered by the angels from the *four* winds of heaven. Or the Church is commanded to loose, i. e., to predict that they shall be loosed in the time of Antichrist; for now they are bound, inasmuch as they cannot do the evil they would. The River Euphrates is the secular power, by means of which the devil dwells in the princes of this world, and rules over them. The hour, and day, and month, and year, denote the three years and a half of Antichrist's reign. The devils are ready to kill the third part of men (which is to be understood in the same way as before), because they are always on the watch to do evil. The number of horsemen denotes the whole number of demons and men; for in the words, *vicies millia dena millia*, the first number, *vicies millia*, denotes the reprobate; *dena millia*, the elect, who keep the ten commandments; for of the elect it is written, "the chariots of God are ten thousand." The number of the reprobate is double that of the elect, because the reprobate consist of evil angels as well as wicked men. They that sat on the horses were demons, or heretics and princes of

¹ The reader will not fail to observe here the manner in which the historical applications crept into the symbo-

lical exposition of the Apocalypse.—See p. 22.

this world, whose ruler is the devil: their breastplates of fire denote their everlasting torments. The heads of the horses are like the heads of lions, for they kill souls, and send forth the stench of evil report. The heads are the authors of error. The fire, smoke, and sulphur proceeding out of their mouths, denote the preaching of the wicked, which kills the third part of men, that is, prepares for those who follow it eternal punishments. Their power is in their mouths, i. e. they deceive by preaching perverse things, and in their tails, i. e. they are aided by temporal power: wherefore we read that their tails are like unto serpents, for the devil, in the form of a serpent, deceived the woman; so heretics, if they fail to deceive by the pravity of their error, overpower by the secular arm. Their heads denote the princes of this world, with whom heretics ally themselves to subvert the faith. "The rest of men," i. e. the pagans, "which were not killed by these plagues," i. e. were not deceived by the heretics, "yet repented not, &c.," and therefore will not perish in like manner by the fire, smoke, and brimstone; q. d. heretics deceive only Christians and Jews, but nevertheless, the pagans, because they know not God, will perish no less than if they had been deceived by heretics; what then will be the punishment of those who despise the advantages they possess, the knowledge of God, and faith, if pagans, who know God only by the light of nature, shall nevertheless perish?

We may now pass on to the school of interpreters, with whom the historical or controversial expositions of the Apocalypse, properly so called, began.

One of the first, or at least one of the most popular of them, was

PETRUS AUREOLUS,

called in the schools, *Doctor Facundus*, who is commonly said to have been a Franciscan, and to have been raised to the Archbishopric of Aix, in France, A. D. 1321. He is also said by some to have been a Cardinal in the Church of Rome^k.

^k Oudin seems to have proved that our author was not a Franciscan, nor a bishop, nor a cardinal, all which dignities have been conferred upon him by mistake; his name was *Oriol*, lati-

nized *Aureolus*, and he is often called *Petrus de Verberia*, from the place of his birth. Oudin infers that he was not a Franciscan from the fact, that in an instrument issued in 1332, by some

His exposition of the Apocalypse, which is contained in his popular work called *Breviarium Bibliorum*, was written in the year 1319¹. His general division of the prophecy has been already spoken of (p. 30), and it must therefore suffice here to give an abstract of a portion of his exposition on what he calls *The Third Vision*, (Rev. xii.-xv.) which he supposes to predict the events from the emperors Phocas and Maurice, under whom was Pope Gregory, to Constantine, who was blinded by his mother, Irene.

The events foretold in this vision (according to this author), are the following :

I. It predicts four remarkable events which happened under Pope Gregory, or a little before, and occasioned a great change in the Church, viz., 1. The institution of the Feast of the Purification or Presentation of Christ in the Temple (February 2), on the occasion of a plague in Constantinople, which ceased on the celebration of the feast. This is signified (ch. xi. 19) by the words, *The temple of God was opened in heaven*, i. e. the festival of the Temple, or of Christ's presentation in the Temple, was begun in the Church. 2. The mission of St. Augustine, and other monks, into England, whose miracles are foretold by St. John, when he says that *there were lightnings*, i. e. there were miracles, *and voices*, i. e. preaching throughout all England, followed by the conversion of the nation ; and about the same time the Arme-

Doctors of the University of Paris, of whom he was one, he subscribes himself "Petrus de Verberia ordinis vallis scholarium." Also in the Necrology of the priory of St. Catherine de Cultura in Paris, a MS. of the 15th century, is the following entry : "Item debemus orare pro anima Magistri Petri de Verberia, Magistri in Theologia, qui fuit frater de Regali loco" [Royaulieu] "et quondam Prior Trecentis." Oudin de Scriptoribus Eccles. tom. iii. pp. 847—856.

¹ Wharton, in his Appendix to Cave, gives 1345 as the date of the *Breviarium*; but the following passage in the exposition of the Apocalypse, fixes it to an earlier period. Speaking of the thousand years (Rev. xx. 7.) he says : "Dubium est a quo tempore debeant computari : et manifestum est quod non

possunt inchoari a nativitate Christi quia jam transierunt mille et trecenti et amplius, nec tamen adhuc apparet Antichristus. Et ideo alii probabilius inchoant a Baptismo Constantini, sub tempore Papæ Sylvestri, quando Christus et Ecclesia incepit regnare, et honor imperii translatus est in personam Sylvestri et in Romanam Ecclesiam, et Episcopi et Sacerdotis honorati sunt sicut Reges qui jam per 300 annos sub Paganis imperatoribus atrociter fuerant trucidati. Sedit autem Sylvester an. 316, qui si tollantur ab his qui hodie computantur, remanent mille et tres, et sic jam deberet esse natus et habere tres annos."—*Brev. Biblior.* ed. 4ta. Lovan. 1647, p. 409. It is evident, therefore, from these words, that this part of the work, at all events, must have been composed in 1319.

nians also received baptism. 3. The institution of monasteries, denoted by the *earthquake*, i. e. the shaking of the hearts of the worldly. 4. The murder of the emperor Maurice, by Phocas, signified by the *great hail*, i. e. the persecution and murder of great men.

II. The fortunes of the Church under Heraclius, to the flight of Chosroes. *The woman clothed with the sun*, &c. (xii. 1) is mother Church, clothed with Christ, and crowned with the doctrine of the twelve apostles; she cried travailing in birth, until she brought forth the emperor Heraclius. The Dragon (v. 3) is Chosroes, who set himself up as God, building a tower, from which, by pipes curiously contrived (and hence he is called *Red, Rufus*; "propter callidum modum quo quasi Deus pluebat et vocem tonitrui fingeat") he caused water to be discharged, thus giving out that he was able, as a God, to send down rain. He had *seven heads and seven crowns*, to denote the multitude of kingdoms that were subject to him; and he *drew the third part of the stars*, because he destroyed a third part of the churches of the world. *He stood before the woman*, thirsting for the blood of the Christians, *to devour her child*, viz. Heraclius, against whom he used all craft. *The woman fled into the wilderness*, i. e. to Constantinople; for the Asiatic Christians were forced to seek the protection of the Emperor in Constantinople; *to a place prepared of God*, for Heraclius, in the twelfth year of his reign, set out against the Persians, carrying an image of the blessed Mother of God before his army, and after a seven years' war conquered Chosroes; and this is foretold by St. John, when he says that *Michael and his angels fought against the dragon*, who is called *the old serpent*, because Persia was the oldest empire then in the world. *And the dragon was cast out*, i. e. Chosroes was defeated by Heraclius, and abandoned the holy land, an event which caused great joy in the Church, v. 10, 11. And it is to be observed that, as the Apostle says (v. 11.) of the angels who fought with the dragon, that "they loved not their lives unto the death," he must mean not literal angels, but Christian men, for angels cannot suffer death.

III. The woe (ver. 12.) denotes the new attempt made by

Chosroes after his defeat, to cut off the army of Heraclius ; for, after his flight, he raised a new army and sent it forth under two leaders (which is signified by the water as a flood cast out of the dragon's mouth after the woman, v. 15); but this attempt was also defeated, i. e. the flood was swallowed up, v. 15.

IV. The prophecy next describes the victory of Heraclius over the son of Chosroes, whom his father made king, and sent with a great army to the Danube, where it was resolved that the fate of the day should be decided by a single combat between Heraclius and the son of Chosroes ; but the Lord gave the victory to the former, and the Persian army submitted to the Christians. This is signified by *the beast*, viz. the son of Chosroes, *to whom the dragon gave his power* (xiii. 1, 2.), and who, being *one of the heads* of the army, was *wounded to death*, but not killed ; for he afterwards rebelled, and renounced Christianity, i. e. *his deadly wound was healed*. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, v. 7, for he martyred many saints, as St. Anastasius, and seventy monks with him, and many others.

V. *If any man have an ear, &c.* (v. 9). This denotes the end of the war with Chosroes, which lasted seven years ; for it is said (xii. 6) that the woman fled into a place where she was nourished of God for 1260 days, or three years and a half ; and again (v. 14), that she fled into the wilderness for a time, and times, and half a time, which are also three years and a half, and both together make seven years. And the war was terminated by the emperor bringing back to Jerusalem the cross of the Lord, and taking captive many thousand Persians ; therefore St. John says, "let him who has spiritual ears understand that the war will be ended when *he who leadeth into captivity* (scil. the Persians, who had led captive so many Christians) *shall go into captivity*, and when *he who killeth with the sword* (viz., Chosroes) *shall himself be killed with the sword*" (v. 10). And thus was tried the *patience and faith* of Zacharias the patriarch, and the captives whom Heraclius brought back from Persia to Jerusalem.

VI. The second beast predicts the times of Heraclius and the rise of Mahometanism. The apostacy of Heraclius to the Euty-chian heresy was followed by the Mahometan persecution of the

Church. Mahomet, therefore, is the beast having two horns like to a lamb, for he pretended to the gift of prophecy and miracles, and an ox and a lamb were said to have spoken to him. *He spake as a dragon*, i. e. as Chosroes, who desired to be worshipped for a God, as Mahomet desired to be esteemed greatest among the messengers of God, so that his followers say that the name of Mahomet was before God from the beginning, and had it not been so that God would never have created the world. *He exerciseth the power of the first beast*, because he continued the kingdom of Persia under the name of the Saracens. *He deceiveth them that dwell on the earth*, by the sect founded by him ; in which *he made fire come down from heaven*, by the partial use he made of the Holy Scriptures to deceive weak Christians and Jews. *The image of the beast* is the Caliph, whom the Saracens honour as their chief pontiff and the source of spiritual power. *The mark* denotes circumcision and other sacraments or ceremonies appointed in the Koran. *That no man buy or sell, &c.*, Mahomet prohibited to his followers all intercourse with other nations, and commanded them to put to death all who blasphemed his law. *The number of the beast* intimates the period of the duration of the Mahometan sect ; and Pope Innocent III. understands it to signify 666 years ; but if we compute them from the time of Mahomet, who began A. D. 627, they are now some time expired ; and the Saracens themselves (" ut dicitur ") confess, that for the last fifty years their sect exists only " de gratia," because it ought to have ceased according to their own prophecies. But others say that after the death of Mahomet, his successors, Ebiben, and afterwards Elegeip, corrected and amended the Koran, and that the 666 years must begin from that event ; and if so they are not yet elapsed^m. It is to be observed also that a Nestorian monk named Sergius assisted Mahomet in his imposture, by giving answers from some place in which he was hid. This monk, perhaps, was the image of the beast which was made to *speak*.

^m Nicholas de Lyra, who wrote his commentary or postills on the Apocalypse in the year 1329, adopts the same interpretation of this vision ; but he rejects both the foregoing modes of

computing the 666 years, and makes them signify the period between the death of Mahomet and the Incarnation of our Lord, which he supposes to have been exactly 666 years.

It would be easy to add to the foregoing specimens of ancient apocalyptic interpretation, but the object of this note is now, it is hoped, sufficiently attained.

NOTE B.—See LECTURE II. p. 59.

On the Interpretation of REV. i. 10.

The following letters, which appeared in the British Magazine, some years ago, will put the reader in possession of the arguments brought forward by the Rev. S. R. Maitland, in favour of the interpretation of Rev. i. 10, which has been advocated in the second of the foregoing lectures :

The following statement of the argument will be found in the British Magazine for September, 1839 :

“ON ‘THE LORD’S DAY.’—REV. i. 10.

“The opinion respecting the translation of this passage which I stated sixteen years ago in a periodical work of very limited circulation, and which has been for many years dropped, having been alluded to in this Magazine, I shall be glad to state it more fully. I do it with a view of eliciting the opinions of others rather than of dogmatically propounding one of my own, and request that what I now write may be regarded merely in the light of an inquiry.

“Our version makes St. John say, ‘I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day;’ and the translators are, I believe, generally supposed to have meant (that is, they understood the apostle to mean) that he was on a certain first day of the week (expressed by ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ) in a certain peculiar state (called ἐν πνεύματι). But this appears to me to assume two things of which I see no proof, and which I really believe to be false.

“I. It assumes that the contemporaries of St. John knew the first day of the week by the title of the Lord’s day; for if they did not, we can hardly imagine that he would have used it.

“Yet I know of nothing in the Scripture or the works of the anti-Nicene fathers on which to ground such an assumption”. In the very face of it we find Justin Martyr calling it the sun’s day, τοῦ ἡλίου ἡμέραν. Could this have been the case if St. John’s contemporaries, disciples, and followers had known the day by the name of ‘the Lord’s day?’ Let it be remembered, that I am speaking of the

“I am aware of the passages professedly brought from Ignatius, Irenæus, &c., and I quoted and observed on them in the paper to which I refer; but

it does not seem worth while to repeat what I there said. They may all be found referred to either in Grotius on the place, or in Suicer in v. Κυριακή.”

name only, and that this inquiry has nothing to do with the fact, or the mode, of its sanctification.

"But it may be said that at an early period in the history of the Church, the first day of the week was undoubtedly known by that name. How do we know this? Very certainly, I grant, by finding the phrase in the works of writers of a certain period, just as we should find it in the works of their predecessors if it had been known and used in their days. What, it may be asked, led to the change? I do not know that this is a fair question, or that, at this distance of time, one should be called on to speculate as to what may have occasioned an obvious fact; much less should a palpable inference from a fact be denied because we cannot account for the existence of the fact itself. But the truth is, that an historian tells us, in plain terms, both when and how the alteration was made. Nicephorus Callistus says that the day which the Hebrews call the first day, and the Greeks the sun's day, Constantine ordered to be called 'The Lord's-day'. Why should any have said this of Constantine if it was not true? And now that it is said, and supported by all the negative evidence which the case admits, why should any body doubt it?

"If St. John, then, did not mean the first day of the week, what did he mean by *ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ*? I should say that which St. Peter and St. Paul meant by *ἡ ἡμέρα Κυρίου*; and if it be further asked how St. John could be in that day, I answer that, of course, he was not bodily present, and seems to have anticipated the question by stating that it was *ἐν πνεύματι*; for—

"II. The common view assumes a second point, which seems to me to have no solid ground. It takes for granted that this phrase *ἐν πνεύματι*, may be used to signify simply a state or mode of existence, without reference to anything seen, heard, or done—that St. John was in this particular state on a certain day, which might or might not have been followed by his hearing, seeing, or knowing any of the specific things afterwards mentioned. But let us see how this phrase is elsewhere used. I believe that when our Lord says 'How then doth David in spirit call him Lord?' nobody supposes him to have meant that the psalmist was in a peculiar state of trance, so that, independent of his saying or doing this or anything else, he might have been said to be 'in the spirit;' but that he spoke under inspiration, or a divine influence of God's Spirit on his own spirit. The words are parenthetically used by our Lord, and I believe also by St. John, 'How then doth David (in spirit) call him Lord?'—'I was (in spirit) in the Lord's day.' The fact of its being 'in spirit' seems to be referred to in the two cases for very obvious reasons, though for different ones, owing to the different natures of the cases and the effects. It led David to call Christ 'Lord,' and it was important to shew that he did not do this as a mere fallible man. It placed St. John amid the scenery of the second advent, and it was natural for him to say (as he was able to say) that he was there only in spirit; for St. Paul would have said, but

ο "Ἦν δ' Ἑβραῖοι πρῶτην εἶχον κυριακὴν κατανόμασε.—Lib. vii. c. 46, ἡμέραν, Ἕλληνες δ' ἡλίκῃ ἀνέθεντο, or Suicer in v. Κυριακή."

was not able, whether, when he was 'caught up into Paradise,' he was 'in the body or out of the body' (2 Cor. xii. 1, &c.)

"But, what is still more important, there are two places where the same phrase is used by the Apostle in this very book; and they deserve particular attention. He begins the fourth chapter by saying: 'After this I looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven; and the first voice which I heard was as of a trumpet talking with me, which said, "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." And immediately I was in the spirit; and behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne,' &c. Now if we understand being 'in the spirit' to be merely a mode or state of existence, enabling the Apostle to see visions and apprehend supernatural communications, how shall we account for his seeing the door in heaven, and hearing the voice that talked with him, *before* he became 'in the spirit.' Does not the Apostle mean to state that, in obedience (or perhaps I should say consequence) of the command, he was in that place to which he had been called? That he was so may be inferred from his proceeding to describe it, though he was there only 'in spirit.' Does he not mean to state the fact of his transport, or being carried to the interior of the door, by saying *ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι*? Otherwise he does not state at all that any such change of circumstances took place, though, as I have said, it seems implied in his description of what he saw, 'a throne set in *heaven*.'

"This is rendered still more probable by the use which the Apostle makes of the phrase in another place. In chap. xvii. ver. 1-3, he says that one of the angels who had the vials talked with him, and adds, 'He carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness.' Here I cannot tell what can be understood, or what can be supposed to be meant, except that he was, as to his spirit, conveyed to one place, while he was bodily in another. When he was there he might, I presume, have said, 'I was, in the spirit, in the wilderness; just as in the passage particularly under our notice he says, 'I was, in the spirit, on the Lord's day.' His spirit being supernaturally carried forward in time or space, to a distant period or locality.

"This interpretation of the passage would account more satisfactorily than any commentators whom I have met with for the prefixed article. He would naturally say, '*the* day of the Lord;' but as they have observed, if he meant only Sunday, we must suppose something further intended by '*the* Sunday.' Nothing of this sort can, I believe, be made out, nor any reason assigned why the Apostle should name the day of the week on which he saw the vision, though of course he might do so as a mere matter of fact. But supposing him to refer to the advent of Christ, it is carrying on the very subject of which he was speaking; and is not what he says here the very thing which led him to say what he did only three verses before, and what he seems there to announce as the great subject of his Apocalypse, 'Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him?'

"It is obvious that if the interpretation which I propose be admitted, it will

have a most important influence on the exposition of the whole book. The Apocalypse will be set before us as a prophecy still to be fulfilled; we shall be delivered not merely from the silly conceits and historical falsehoods of some private interpretations, but from the substantial difficulties which attend all attempts to explain the Apocalypse as a fulfilled prophecy; we shall be permitted to believe that when the trumpets of God shall sound, his Church militant here on earth will know that sound—and when his vials are poured out, his Church will know the fact—that when the beast and the false prophet are abroad, they will not deceive the elect of God—that when his witnesses are actually prophesying, his Church will not be crying out, ‘Lo, here,’ or ‘Lo, there,’ or disputing whether they are among things past, present, or future; in short, we shall be delivered from those modern systems which few understand, and fewer still perhaps believe, but of which many know just so much as to repel them from the study of a part of the word of God on which so much that is false and penile has been grafted.

“In saying this I do not by any means intend to rest the fact of the prophecy being unfulfilled on the interpretation more immediately in question. Independent of that, the non-fulfilment of the Apocalypse may, I think, be demonstrated. But I mean to say that, if this interpretation be the true one, it harmonizes with what I believe on other grounds, and will not be easily explained by those who adopt the idea that the greater part of the Apocalypse has been long ago fulfilled. The question whether the interpretation is right is, however, quite independent of this consideration.

“S. R. MAITLAND.”

The publication of this letter gave rise to some discussion, and several communications on the subject appeared in the same periodical. In October, 1839, a writer under the signature of T. H. B. made the following objections to Mr. Maitland's views^p:

“ON ‘THE LORD'S DAY.’—REV. I. 10.

To the Editor of the British Magazine.

“SIR,—As the reasoning of Mr. Maitland on the subject of ‘The Lord's day,’ Rev. i. 10, seems to me attended with the evil effects of weakening the authority, or calling in question the integrity, of that book of the scriptural canon, and of casting doubt upon the apostolical establishment of the Lord's day, I beg to trouble you with the following observations:

“Mr. Maitland considers that in Rev. i. 10, ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ means the

^p Other replies to Mr. Maitland's letter will be found, *British Magazine*, vol. xvi. pp. 525, 526, 654; vol. xvii. p. 164; but as they, for the most part,

take for granted the truth of the popular interpretations, which is the very question in dispute, it will be unnecessary to notice them further.

day of our Lord's second advent, founding that consideration on the authority of a passage in an historian, of which the translation given is not very accurate. The historian really says, 'the day which the Hebrews held the first day of the week, and the Greeks dedicated to the sun, Constantine firstly named the Lord's-day,' so designated probably the day firstly in the imperial calendar.

"That the first day of the week was familiarly known to the Church as the Lord's-day long before the time of Constantine—i. e., in the tenth year of Commodus, and one hundred and ninetyeth of the Church—appears from the 23rd chapter of the fifth book of Eusebius, no little question having in these times been agitated because that the parishes of all Asia, as from some more ancient tradition, considered that the feast of the saving Passover (viz., Easter-day) should be kept on the fourteenth day of the moon, on which day it was ordered to the Jews to sacrifice the lamb, on whatever day of the week that fourteenth should fall, it not being the custom of the Churches throughout the rest of the world to observe this practice, they preserving from apostolical tradition the custom until that time prevailing, that it behoved on no other day than that of the resurrection of the Saviour to observe the termination of the fast—i. e., to celebrate Easter. Synods, therefore, and discussions of bishops, were held upon this matter, and all, with one opinion, signified their determination in ecclesiastical letters to them everywhere (i. e., the universal Church), that on no other day than that of the Lord should be celebrated the mystery of the resurrection of the Lord from the dead:—*ὥς ἂν μὴ δὲ ἐν ἄλλῃ ποτὲ τῆς κυριακῆς ἡμέρᾳ, τὸ τῆς ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστάσεως ἐπιτελοῖτο τοῦ Κυρίου μυστήριον.*

"The article in *ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ*, Rev. i. 10, simply has the force of marking that day of the week which is dedicated to the Lord; *ἡ κυριακὴ ἡμέρα* is too familiar an expression for the great and terrible day of the Lord—*ἡ ἡμέρα Κυριοῦ*.

"The passage which I have produced from Eusebius shews what in the earliest period of the Church the first day of the week was called—viz., that of the resurrection—*τὴν τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ Σωτῆρος*, and which was so observed from the beginning—from the time, i. e., of the resurrection itself of our Lord: 'On the first day of the week, when the disciples were assembled'—(John, xx. 19.). But it is needless to bring the proofs existing in the apostolical writings of this continued practice from that period until in the Apocalypse, written when the customs of the church had become established, the name appears by which the day then and ever since has been known.

"I merely dispute Mr. Maitland's interpretation of the words *ἡ κυριακὴ ἡμέρα*, and contend that they never had any other meaning in the Church than that of the Lord's-day as now understood. His general character of the book, and observations of the folly and danger of tampering with it, I perfectly concur in.

"T. H. B."

To this letter, in the next Number of the Magazine, Mr. Maitland published the following reply :

"ON 'THE LORD'S DAY.'—REV. I. 10.

To the Editor of the British Magazine.

"Sir,—In reply to 'T. H. B.'s strictures on what I said in the Number for September, I would observe—

"1. That I do not see how my view of the passage can lead to 'weakening the authority, or calling in question the integrity' of the Apocalypse. It seems to me that when such charges are made, they ought to be very explicit. This one I really do not understand, and therefore cannot answer.

"2. He says that I understand the words *ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ* to mean 'the day of our Lord's second advent, founding that consideration on the authority of a passage in an historian of which the translation given is not very accurate.' It will be obvious to any body who looks at what I wrote that I founded the consideration infinitely more on what others did *not*, than on any thing which Nicephorus *did* write; but whatever that was, there was no 'translation given.' I made a statement in the text as to the purport of Nicephorus's evidence, and I gave his words in the margin as a voucher for the truth of that statement; but I did not profess to translate them. I notice these points because some experience has shewn me that in all controversy, however trifling or important, the points which it is most necessary to meet in the first instance are those which are calculated to raise undefined and ungrounded prejudice. Before they get to the real question, the readers of 'T. H. B.'s' letter are led to understand that I am somehow or other weakening the authority, or calling in question the integrity, of the word of God by means of a mistranslated scrap of Greek, and that he is going to set me right by shewing what 'the historian *really* says,' as opposed to what I pretend that he says. I have already said that I did not profess to translate the words of the historian. I said, 'Nicephorus Callistus says that the day which the Hebrews call the first day, and the Greeks the Sun's day, Constantine ordered to be called the Lord's day;' and I gave his words in a note: "Ἦν Ἑβραῖοι πρώτην εἶχον ἡμέραν, Ἕλληνες δ' ἡλίῳ ἀνέθεντο, κυριακὴν κατ-ωνόμασε. Though not a professed translation, I suspect that my words more accurately render those of the historian than 'T. H. B.'s' statement of what he 'really' says: 'The day which the Hebrews held the first day of the week, and the Greeks dedicated to the sun, Constantine firstly named the Lord's day.' Of this, however, let the reader judge. It is curious that after having, as he represents it, for the sake of accuracy, introduced the word 'firstly,' 'T. H. B.' immediately tries to get rid of its force by adding 'so designated *probably* the day firstly in the imperial calendar.' So that the '*firstly* named,' which is what the historian *really* says, means that Constantine '*probably*' ordered the old name, by which everybody had known the day for centuries, to be put in the calendar.

I think that, without saying anything about accuracy, 'T. H. B.' had better have accepted my words—'ordered to be called.'

"3. The allegation of Eusebius will not help him. That there was a controversy long *before* the time of Constantine which concerned that day which he called, and we call, the Lord's day, is certain; and it is equally certain that, in writing the history of that controversy *after* the time of Constantine, Eusebius called the day by that name which he is said to have given it; but what is this to the purpose? In an account of London before me the writer says, 'Waterloo Bridge crosses the Thames The work was begun in 1811,' &c. Am I to argue from this that the bridge received its name several years before the battle? The argument would be quite as good as that drawn from Eusebius.

"4. 'T. H. B.' says that the article 'has simply the force of marking that day of the week which is dedicated to the Lord.' Be it so, if it is so. I do not want to make anything of it; and my remark was only intended to meet a criticism of Eichorn, who made that article a ground for supposing that the words referred to some particular, and probably to Easter, Sunday. When 'T. H. B.' adds that 'ἡ κυριακὴ ἡμέρα is too familiar an expression for the great and terrible day of the Lord,' he is, of course, only expressing an opinion on a matter of taste. I do not perceive the familiarity.

"5. I quite agree with 'T. H. B.' that it is needless for him to bring proofs that the early Christians were in the habit of assembling on the first day of the week. Why should he even mention it? Suppose it should really be proved beyond all doubt that St. John does *not* say anything about the day of the week on which he saw the vision, how *can* that affect the proof that Christians used to assemble on the first day?

"I shall be very glad if the question can be looked at without reference to irrelevant matter. It appears to me to be very important, and I sincerely wish to be considered as inquiring, rather than as attempting to decide it. I stated in my former paper that many years ago I examined all the authorities adduced by Grotius and Suicer, they being, as far as I still know, all that have been alleged by anybody. There may, however, be many, for it is only since I saw the letter of 'T. H. B.' that I have met with the word in Origen's book against Celsus, lib. viii. c. 22. This carries the name so far back as to shew that if Nicephorus meant (as I believe he did) to say that the name was first given by Constantine, he was mistaken. Those who are engaged in reading the works of the early fathers may perhaps find more instances, or matter in some way illustrating the case, and I shall be very glad to receive any information.—I am, &c.

"S. R. MAITLAND."

The following letter from the Rev. William Fitzgerald, of Trinity College, Dublin, contains some important examples of the use of the phrase κυριακὴ ἡμέρα in early ecclesiastical writers,

to denote the Sunday, or first day of the week. This letter, although dated in November, 1839, did not appear in the British Magazine, (in consequence of having been mislaid by the Editor,) until March, 1840 :

“ ON REVELATION, i. 10.

To the Editor of the British Magazine.

“ Sir,—Perhaps you may deem the following testimonies to the anti-Constantine observance of the Lord's-day, *under that title*, worth insertion—

“ Clemens Alex. Strom. v. τὴν δὲ κυριακὴν ἡμέραν ἐν τῷ δεκάτῳ τῆς πολιτείας ὁ Πλάτων καταμαντεύεται. (p. 600, a. Paris, 1629) Strom. vii. ἐπὶ τὴν κυριακὴν ὄντως διὰ τῆς ἁγίας ἐβδομάδος ἐπείγεται. (p.¹ 733, a.). Ibid. οὗτος ἐντόλῃν τὴν κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον διαπραξάμενος, κυριακὴν ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν ποιεῖ τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ τοῦ Κυρίου ἀνάστασιν δοξάζων. (p. 744, d.)

“ Dionysius of Corinth. τὴν σήμερον ἁγίαν κυριακὴν ἡμέραν διηγάγομεν. (apud Euseb. H. E. lib. iv. c. 23.)

“ Tertullian. Non *Dominicum* diem non Pentecostem. De Idol. (cap. 14).

“ Victorinus of Pettaw, ‘Idcirco ut *die Dominico* ad panem exeamus, &c.’ de Fabrica Mundi. (apud Cave Hist. Literar. p. 95, Genev. 1720).

“ W. FITZGERALD.

“ Dublin, Nov. 22nd, 1839.”

These testimonies, therefore, will modify the statement of Nicephorus, that Constantine was the first who gave the name of Lord's Day to the first day of the week^a ; but the general argument remains untouched, for it is to be observed, that the question is, not *who* first gave the name, but *when* it first came into use: and even though there should be found examples of it in writers of the second century, it does not follow that St. John,

^a The statement of Nicephorus is not borne out either by Eusebius or Sozomen, neither of whom tells us that Constantine was the first to give the name of *κυριακή* to this day; and it is remarkable that in the actual decree attributed to Constantine as it is now extant in the civil law, (Cod. Justinian. tit. *De feriis*, leg. iii.), the very decree which commands the observance of the day as a holiday, it is called not *dies dominica*, but *dies solis*. It may be mentioned here, that Mr. Fitzgerald is wrong in supposing the word *κυριακήν*,

in the second of his quotations from Clement of Alexandria, to mean the Lord's day. He would have seen this if he had quoted the word *μονήν*, which immediately follows *ἐπείγεται*, and is necessary to complete the sense. Clement is there speaking of the *ἐβδόμαδες*, or mansions of the blessed, and of the *ὀγδοάς*, or highest heaven, in which he places the immediate abode of the Divine Presence, *κυριακή μονή*. Mr. Fitzgerald might have learned this from Potter's note on the passage.

at the close of the first, would have been understood to have intended the first day of the week, when he said, ἡγούμενη ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ.

It seems certain that even in the times of Eusebius the name was not generally adopted, for whenever he has occasion to mention it, he always explains it by telling us that it is the day called Sunday, and calls it indifferently τῇ κυριακῇ and τὴν σατῆριον, in a manner which clearly shews that the title of κυριακῇ had not then become the general and recognized name of the day. See De Vit. Constant. lib. iv. c. 18, and Orat. de laudibus Constant. c. 9 ; on which we may further remark, that if Eusebius had been of opinion, or had believed that the phrase κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ was to be found in this sense in the Apocalypse, he could scarcely fail to have mentioned a fact so apposite to his purpose, his object evidently being to explain and defend the use of that name as a substitute for the Gentile name of Sunday.

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